

Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) for Trichomoniasis: A Guide for Patients Who Received Metronidazole for Their Partner(s)



Why am I getting an extra prescription or medicine?

You have been diagnosed with and treated for trichomoniasis, an infection that spreads during vaginal sex. Your sex partner or partners also need to be treated so they do not develop serious health problems, reinfect you or pass the infection to others. Give the extra prescription or medicine to your sex partner(s). The medicine, called metronidazole (Flagyl), is safe and almost 100% effective when taken correctly.



What is trichomoniasis?

Trichomoniasis is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) that spreads during vaginal sex. People who have trichomoniasis usually do not have symptoms. If people do have symptoms, they can include discharge (often with a foul smell), itching or irritation in and around the genitals, penis or vagina.



What should I do next?

Now:

- Get treated for trichomoniasis.
- Tell anyone that you have had sex with in the past two months that you have been diagnosed with and treated for trichomoniasis. Explain that trichomoniasis is an STI and that they may have been exposed to it.
- Give your sex partner(s) the prescription or medicine, along with the fact sheet titled “Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) for Trichomoniasis: A Guide for Partners Who Received Metronidazole.” Encourage them to read the information and take the medicine.

- Encourage your sex partner(s) to visit a health care provider or clinic to get tested for other STIs, even if they take the medicine.

Later:

- Wait seven days after both you and your partner or partners have completed treatment before having sex.
- Visit a health care provider or clinic in three months to get retested for trichomoniasis.



How do I tell my sex partner(s) I was treated for trichomoniasis?

Telling your sex partner(s) that you have an STI can be difficult, but they need to get treated so they do not reinfect you or any other sex partner(s). Try to be open and honest with your sex partner(s). You could say:

“I recently found out that I have an STI called trichomoniasis. Because we had sex, you might have it too. There is no way for us to know who got it first because most people do not have symptoms. You should take this medicine and read the pamphlet that came with the medicine. Be sure to visit a health care provider to get tested for other STIs.”

Your sex partner(s) may feel embarrassed, ashamed, guilty, angry or scared — and you may feel this way too. These feelings are normal. By offering them treatment, you show that you care and want to help.



What if my sex partner or partners are angry?

Your partner may get angry and blame you for giving them trichomoniasis, but you may

not have infected them. People who have trichomoniasis usually do not have symptoms, so a person could have it for a long time and not know. Most of the time, there is no way to know who got trichomoniasis first. The most important thing is to tell your sex partner(s) about your infection so they can take their treatment and avoid serious health problems.



What if my sex partner or partners become violent?

If you think a sex partner could become violent, you should not give them the prescription or medicine. Call **911** immediately if a sex partner threatens you or becomes violent.



Should my sex partner(s) take the medicine even if they do not have symptoms?

Yes. People can have trichomoniasis without having symptoms and taking the medicine will cure it.



What if one of my sex partners is pregnant, thinks they may be pregnant or is breastfeeding?

If one of your sex partners is pregnant or thinks they may be pregnant, they should still take this medicine. They should also see a health care provider as soon as possible to be tested for other STIs, which can also be passed on to the baby. If left untreated, trichomoniasis can cause pregnant people to have their babies too early (preterm delivery), and it can cause a baby to have a low birth weight. If they are breastfeeding, they should pump their breast milk and throw it away (“pump and dump”) until 24 hours after they have finished taking the medicine. They should not feed that breast milk to their child.



What should I do after I give my sex partner(s) the prescription or medicine?

The medicine takes seven days to work. Take your medicine now and do not have vaginal, anal or oral sex for at least seven days after both you and your sex partner or partners have been treated. You can get trichomoniasis again if you have sex before you and your sex partner or partners are cured.



What if a sex partner will not take the medicine?

If a sex partner will not take the medicine, they should see a health care provider as soon as possible to be tested and treated for trichomoniasis. Tell your partner that not getting treated could result in serious health problems. In the meantime, do not have sex with them until seven days after they have completed treatment.



What if I cannot get the medicine to all of my sex partners?

If you are unable to give the medicine to all of your sex partners, return it to the health care provider or clinic that gave it to you. Do not share your medicine with others. You need to take your own treatment for trichomoniasis and so do your partners. Do not have sex with any untreated partners until they get their own treatment.



How can I prevent STIs?

Using condoms correctly and consistently when having sex is the best way to prevent STIs.