

What is Mycoplasma genitalium?

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MG is an infection similar to chlamydia. It is spread through sexual contact. It infects the cervix (neck of the womb) and the central tube of the penis (urethra) in men. It can also sometimes infect the urethra in women and the throat and anus in both men and women. Unlike chlamydia we do not know how common MG is, although studies indicate it behaves in a similar fashion to chlamydia and may be nearly as common.

Are there any symptoms of infection?

Women: Although less is known about MG we suspect, like chlamydia, that a most women will not have any symptoms at all. When MG does cause symptoms, they are similar to those caused by chlamydia and can include a vaginal discharge, burning or stinging when passing urine, pain during sex or lower abdominal pain.

Men: In men the symptoms of MG are also similar to those caused by chlamydia, and include discharge from the penis, stinging or burning when passing urine or pain in the testicles and scrotum. However we suspect a significant number of men will not have any symptoms of infection.

As it is likely that many women infected with MG will not have any symptoms, they will not know they have the infection. This study will help us determine how many young Australia women actually catch MG infection during a 12 month period. This is very important information and we will use it to plan how to control MG infection.

Why are we worried about MG infection?

If left untreated, MG infection may cause serious health complications. Preliminary studies indicate that like chlamydia, MG may cause an infection of the womb (uterus) and fallopian tubes (that connect the ovaries to the womb), a condition called pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). PID can cause infertility in women (inability to become pregnant). However more studies are needed to confirm this association. For men, infection with MG may cause pain and swelling of the testicles.

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How do you catch MG?

- MG is sexually transmitted, so you can catch it by having sex without a condom with someone who has the infection.

How do you prevent getting infected with MG?

- Use condoms when having sex.
- Get yourself and your partner tested for sexually transmitted infections.

How is MG diagnosed?

MG is easily tested with a simple urine test.

Can MG be cured?

MG is easily treated. Usually just a single dose of the antibiotic azithromycin is used. However in a number of cases this may not be sufficient and another antibiotic may also be required. In order to be sure we have cured the MG, we will ask all women to provide a second urine sample one month following treatment to be tested again for MG.