

Mycoplasma genitalium – the basics

Mycoplasma genitalium (Mgen) is a sexually transmitted bacteria. Mgen can infect:

- the tube you pass urine from (causing urethritis)
- the cervix (causing cervicitis)
- the womb and fallopian tubes (causing pelvic inflammatory disease).

Less commonly it can be found inside the bum (causing proctitis). However, most people who carry Mgen do not experience any problems.

Testing is available at some (but not all) specialist sexual health clinics. Testing everyone for Mgen is not recommended. Most people with Mgen have no problems and will clear it without treatment. For some people with symptoms, testing for Mgen may be required.

How common is Mgen?

Approximately 10–15% of people with discharge from the penis and/or pain when passing urine have Mgen. About 5–10% of people with a womb who have pelvic inflammatory disease have Mgen.

How do you get Mgen?

Mgen is passed on through vaginal or anal sex without a condom with someone who has the infection. It cannot be caught by kissing, hugging, sharing baths or towels, using swimming pools or from toilet seats.

What would I notice if I had Mgen?

In people with a penis, symptoms may include a burning feeling when passing urine or discharge from the penis. In people with a womb, symptoms may include tummy pain or vaginal bleeding after sex. The doctor or nurse at the clinic will determine if testing is needed based on your symptoms.

How do I get tested for Mgen?

Vaginal samples

A swab is taken from inside the vagina. This swab can be taken by staff or by you if you prefer.

Penile samples

A swab may be taken from the tip of the penis if discharge is present. You will also be asked to give a urine sample.

Most people do not need swabs from the back passage. The clinician will advise you if this is necessary.

How is Mgen treated?

Mgen is treated with antibiotics provided by the sexual health clinic. Treatment is always free.

Important information about your treatment

If you have been diagnosed with Mgen because of your symptoms you should contact your sexual health clinic promptly to discuss if you need treatment. We recommend testing for other STIs if you haven't already.

If your symptoms do not improve with antibiotics, you may need treatment with a second course of antibiotics. You must complete the course of antibiotics. If your symptoms don't get better, you should reattend the clinic for further assessment.

What about my partner?

Mgen is sexually transmitted. It is important that your **current** partner(s) is/are tested for this infection too. This means anyone you are having sex with at the moment or you are likely to have sex with again. If they also carry the

infection, there is a risk you will be re-infected if they are not treated. We can help you tell your partner(s) if this is difficult for you.

What happens if my Mgen is left untreated?

Rarely, Mgen may spread from the cervix to the womb. This is called pelvic inflammatory disease (see the BASHH leaflet 'pelvic inflammatory disease'). Repeated infection of the womb can lead to problems with fertility and pain.

Mgen can spread from the urethra to the testicles causing pain and swelling of the testicles. This is uncommon, and known as epididymo-orchitis (see the BASHH leaflet 'Epididymo-orchitis'). There is no evidence that Mgen causes male infertility.

How long should I wait after treatment before I can have sex again?

You should not have any type of sex (with or without condoms) until you and your partner have finished treatment, and your symptoms have gone.

Can I get Mgen again?

Yes, you can. To prevent this, make sure your current partner(s) have been treated. Protect yourself with new partners by using a condom.

Mgen in pregnancy

Pregnant people can have Mgen. There is very little evidence that the infection will affect pregnancy. Your doctor or nurse will discuss with you whether treatment is needed.

This leaflet was produced by the Clinical Effectiveness Group of the British Association for Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH). The information in the leaflet is based on the 'UK National Guideline for the management of Mycoplasma genitalium infection' published by BASHH in 2025.

For more information regarding BASHH: <https://www.bashh.org/resources/guidelines>

The leaflet was developed following The Information Standard principles developed by NHS England. For more information: www.england.nhs.uk/tis/the-info-standard/

If you would like to comment on this leaflet, please e-mail us at: admin@bashh.org and enter 'M. genitalium PIL' in the subject box

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