

The basics

Mycoplasma genitalium (Mgen) is a bacteria transmitted through sexual contact, but most of the time it does no harm. This leaflet explains when you should consider being tested and treated. 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 rectum (back passage) causing proctitis. However, most people who carry Mgen do not experience any problems.

Testing everyone for Mgen is not recommended; most people with Mgen have no problems and will clear the infection without treatment. For some people with symptoms, testing for Mgen may be required. For people with no symptoms, testing is not recommended unless your current partner is found to have Mgen.

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. Mgen is not usually carried in the mouth or throat so it is unlikely to be passed on through oral sex. It cannot be passed on 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 lower abdominal (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?

Testing is available at some (but not all) specialist sexual health clinics. Mgen testing is not recommended for everyone. Your doctor or nurse will let you know if testing is recommended.

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 rectum (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.

Treatment is only recommended for some people with symptoms. Most people carrying Mgen will clear the infection naturally without it causing any problems. The antibiotics needed to clear Mgen can have serious side effects. The doctor or nurse at the clinic will be able to discuss these with you.

Treatment is not recommended for people with no symptoms unless their current partner has Mgen with symptoms.

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?

Most people carrying Mgen will clear the infection naturally without it causing any problems.

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:

www.bashh.org/guidelines

The leaflet was developed following The Information Standard principles developed by NHS England.

If you would like to comment on this leaflet, e-mail us at:

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in the subject box.

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