

# Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) for Trichomoniasis: A Guide for Partners Who Received Metronidazole



## Why am I getting this prescription or medicine?

One of your sex partners was diagnosed with trichomoniasis, an infection that spreads during vaginal sex. A health care provider gave your sex partner a prescription or medicine to give to you so that you can be treated for trichomoniasis. You also need treatment so you do not develop serious health problems, reinfect your sex partner(s) or pass the infection to others.



## 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. You can give trichomoniasis to others even if you do not have symptoms.



## What is this medicine?

The medicine is called metronidazole (Flagyl). It will cure your trichomoniasis infection but will not treat other STIs. It is safe and almost 100% effective when taken correctly.

Before taking metronidazole, talk to a health care provider if you have any serious, long-term health problems such as kidney, heart or liver disease.

**Do not** take metronidazole if any of the following are true:

- You have lower belly pain or pain during sex.
- You are vomiting or have a fever.
- You have ever had a bad reaction (such as breathing trouble, chest tightness, closing of the throat, swelling of the lips or tongue, or rash) or allergy to metronidazole (Flagyl) or tinidazole.

If you have any of these conditions, visit a health care provider or clinic as soon as possible so that they can give you a different medicine that cures trichomoniasis.



## Why should I take this medicine?

If not treated, trichomoniasis can make it more likely to get or transmit HIV.



## How should I take this medicine?

- Take the medicine by mouth. Do not share it with others. You need to take the full treatment for it to work.
- Take the pills as directed on the prescription or bottle. Be sure to finish all the pills.
- Take the medicine with or without food. Taking it with food may help prevent an upset stomach.
- Take the pills at least 12 hours after you last drank an alcoholic beverage. Wait at least three days after taking the medicine before drinking alcoholic beverages. Using metronidazole and alcohol together may cause abdominal cramps, nausea, vomiting, headaches and redness of the face.

- If you throw up within an hour after taking the medicine, you will have to take another dose since the medicine may not have worked. To get more medicine, call the telephone number on the prescription, or visit a health care provider or clinic.



### What should I do after taking this medicine?

- Do not have vaginal, anal or oral sex for at least seven days after you and your sex partner or partners have been treated. The medicine takes seven days to work.
- Visit a health care provider or clinic and get tested for other STIs, including HIV.



### What if I do not think I have trichomoniasis?

You can have trichomoniasis even if you feel healthy and do not have symptoms. You can get tested to find out if you have trichomoniasis. However, you should still take the medicine now.



### What if I am pregnant, I think I may be pregnant, or I am breastfeeding?

Metronidazole is safe for pregnant people to take, and it can help keep the baby from getting infected during pregnancy and delivery. If left untreated, trichomoniasis can cause you to have your baby too early (preterm delivery), and it can cause your baby to have a low birth weight. You should visit a health care provider or clinic as soon as possible and tell them that you were treated for trichomoniasis because your sex partner had it. You should also ask to be tested for other STIs because some can be passed on to your baby.

If you are breastfeeding, pump your breast milk and throw it away (“pump and dump”)

until 24 hours after you have finished taking the medicine — this ensures your baby does not get exposed to the medicine. Do not feed that breast milk to your child. Pumping will maintain your milk supply and dumping the breast milk will ensure your baby does not get exposed to the medicine.



### Does this medicine cause side effects?

Most people have no side effects from metronidazole. Some people may get diarrhea, stomachache, dizziness or a taste of metal in the mouth. These side effects are not usually serious. Drinking any alcohol with this medicine can cause a severe reaction that may include stomach upset, nausea, vomiting and headache.

Although rare, some people do experience serious allergic reactions to metronidazole. These reactions can cause fever, joint pain, numbness or tingling of the hands and feet, seizures, trouble breathing, chest tightness, closing of the throat, itching or swelling of the lips or tongue, and rash or hives (itchy bumps on the skin). If you experience any of these reactions after taking this medicine, immediately call **911** or go to the nearest emergency room.



### What if I cannot pay for the medicine?

Visit a New York City Sexual Health Clinic and tell them that your sex partner or partners has trichomoniasis. To find a clinic, call **311** or visit [nyc.gov/health/clinics](https://nyc.gov/health/clinics).



### How can I prevent STIs?

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