Trichomonas vaginalis

Trichomonas vaginalis is an anaerobic protozoa that causes trichomoniasis, a sexually transmitted infection of the urogenital tract. Unlike other protozoa, this organism does not have a cyst phase and the trophozoites are directly passed from person to person through sexual contact. Rates of infection between men and women are similar. Women commonly present with vaginitis with pruritus and burning and have a characteristic foul smelling greenish vaginal discharge. Some women with infection will have a strawberry cervix, which is an erythematous cervix with punctate areas of exudation caused by capillary dilation from inflammation. Infections in men are often asymptomatic. Trichomoniasis can be diagnosed via wet mount prep, which demonstrates a characteristic “corkscrew” motility. Infection is treated and cured by metronidazole.



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Characteristics

Protozoa
Propeller-protozoa
Trichomonas vaginalis is an anaerobic flagellated protozoa, which is a unicellular eukaryotic organism.

Signs and Symptoms

Vaginitis
Vagina-on-fire
Vaginitis is inflammation of the vagina that can result in discharge, itching, and pain. It can also result in vulvar itching and redness.

Pruritus
Prairie-dog
Trichomonas vaginalis typically causes vaginal pruritus due to inflammation of the vaginal wall. This pruritus may extend to the vulva as well.

Foul-smelling Greenish Frothy Discharge
Green Discharge
Trichomonas vaginalis is associated with a characteristic greenish colored discharge that is foul smelling.

Strawberry Cervix
Strawberry
Some women with infection will have a strawberry cervix, which is an erythematous cervix with punctate areas of exudation caused by capillary dilation from inflammation.

Diagnosis

Corkscrew Motility on Wet Prep
Wet-slide with Corkscrews
Trichomoniasis can be diagnosed via wet mount prep, which demonstrates a characteristic “corkscrew” motility. NAAT testing can also be used. Additionally, vaginal ph will often be >4.5

Treatment

Metronidazole
Metro-knight
The treatment for Trichomonas vaginalis is metronidazole, which alters oxidative patterns in the organism.

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