

What if my tests for male genital infection are negative but I still have symptoms?

This leaflet provides information for men with symptoms of discharge from the penis, pain on passing urine, irritation of the penis or pain in the testicles whose tests for infection have come back negative.

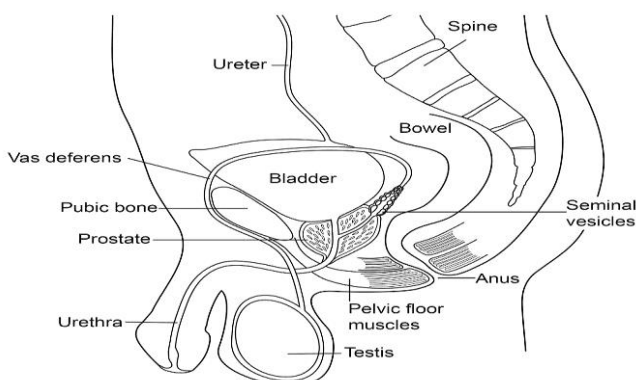
We have introduced the new rapid sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing service so that we can get the results of gonorrhoea and chlamydia tests before you are seen by the doctor or nurse. These infections cause about 40% of cases of urethritis (irritation of the tube inside the penis).

Your tests have come back as negative for gonorrhoea and chlamydia.

As no chlamydia or gonorrhoea infection is found on your tests we will look for inflammation (irritation) of the lining of the tube inside the penis (urethra) with a different test. This involves taking a swab from the tube where you pass urine (urethra). The longer you can hold your urine for, the more accurate this test is. If no inflammation is present on that test either, you are very unlikely to have an infection.

If inflammation is present on that test you will be prescribed antibiotic treatment and be tested for a different STI called *Mycoplasma genitalium* (M gen). If we detect M gen you need to come back and collect more antibiotics as two different antibiotics are usually needed to treat this infection.

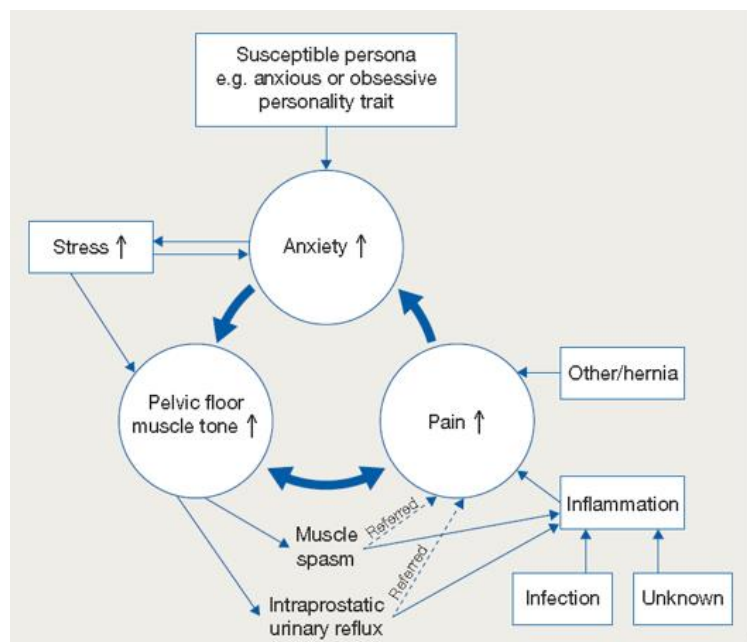
Men whose tests are all negative can sometimes develop symptoms as a result of anxiety because of worrying about having picked up a STI. Anxiety can cause the muscles in their pelvic floor (the muscles around the base of the penis, scrotum and around the anus) to become tense. This may change how urine flows and can cause irritation and discomfort. The nerves that supply the pelvic floor muscles also supply other parts of the genitals such as the end of the penis, the testicles and perineum (the area between your testicles and back passage).



So the body can mistake the pain from the tense pelvic floor muscles and think it is from these other places. It can also seem to be pain in the lower part of your tummy or make you want pass urine more often or make passing urine feel more difficult.

The cycle, which may lead to these symptoms, is outlined in the diagram below.

Diagram of the pelvic pain feedback loop:



Reproduced courtesy of Dr P Horner

Being aware of this process can sometimes help reduce anxiety which may, in turn, reduce how tense the pelvic floor muscles are and therefore reduce symptoms. Here is a link to a website which provides advice on how to relax your pelvic floor muscles. <http://www.pelvicpain.org.au/information/men/pelvic-floor-muscle-relaxation-men/>

If your symptoms continue, we advise coming back first thing in the morning so that we can take a swab from your urethra after you have held your urine overnight. (don't drink any fluids after 8 pm and then pass urine before going to sleep).

If you have any questions or would like further information please discuss this with the member of staff who looked after you today.

This is a first DRAFT of this leaflet (Dec 2018 PJH) if you have any feedback or comments regarding its content, please visit <https://www.unitysexualhealth.co.uk/> and leave your feedback on the homepage