

# Toxic Shock Syndrome-Brief Note

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Toxic shock syndrome is a rare disease caused by a bacterial infection. The cause of bacteria is *Staphylococcus aureus* which gets into the bloodstream and produces toxins. This disease is a serious medical condition.

Although toxic shock syndrome is linked to superabsorbent tampon use in menstruating women, this condition can affect even in men, children, and people of all ages.

Infection occurs when a bacterium enters into the body through an opening of skin like a cut, sore, or other type of wounds. Experts are not sure why the use of tampon sometimes leads to the condition. Some people believe that a tampon left in place for a long period of time attracts the bacteria. The other possibility is that the tampon fibers scratch the vagina, creating an opening for bacteria to enter into the blood.

Risk factor for this condition includes skin burn, skin infection, or surgery. Other risk factors may include:

- Recent childbirth
- Use of vaginal sponge to prevent pregnancy or a diaphragm
- An open skin wound

Doctor may make a diagnosis of toxic shock syndrome based on the physical examination and symptoms. Additionally, doctor may check individual blood and urine for traces of bacteria.

Doctor may also advice to do a blood test to check kidney and liver function. They may also take swabs of cells from your throat, cervix, and vagina. These samples are analysed for the bacteria that causes toxic shock syndrome.

Toxic shock syndrome is considered as a medical emergency. Few people with this condition have to stay in the ICU (Intensive Care Unit) for several days. So that medical team can observe closely and monitor them.

Doctor mostly prescribes an intravenous antibiotic to help and fight with the bacterial infection in the body. This requires the placement of a special line called PICC line or peripherally inserted intravenous catheter. Individual

will receive 6–8 weeks of antibiotics at home. If this is the case, an infectious disease doctor will closely monitor you. Other treatment method for toxic shock syndrome varies on the underlying cause of the disease. For example, if a tampon or vaginal sponge triggers toxic shock, doctor need to remove this foreign object from the body. If an open wound or surgical wound caused toxic shock syndrome, the doctor will drain the pus or blood from wound to clear up the infection.

Toxic shock syndrome is a life-threatening medical condition. In some occasions, toxic shock syndrome may affect major organs in the body. If it is left untreated, complications associated with this disease include:

- Liver failure
- Kidney failure
- Heart failure
- Shock, or reduced blood flow through the body

Certain precautions reduce risk of developing toxic shock syndrome. These precautions include:

- Changing tampon for every four to eight hours
- Wearing a low-absorbency sanitary napkin or tampon during menstruation
- Using a reusable silicone menstrual cup and cleaning your hands thoroughly after changing it
- Wearing a sanitary napkin on light-flow days
- Washing hands frequently to remove bacteria
- Keeping cuts and surgical incisions clean and changing dressings often

Do not wear tampons if you have a personal history of toxic shock syndrome. This disease may recur..

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