

the penis, mild discharge or slight burning after peeing or ejaculation.

Treatment: Your healthcare provider can give you medicine to treat trich. Your sex partner(s) must be treated also, or you will get trich again. Do not have sex until you both finish treatment.

Risks: Trich can cause babies to be born early or with low birth weight. If you think you may be pregnant, be sure to tell your healthcare provider. Trichomoniasis can also increase a woman's chance of getting HIV if she is exposed.

STAYING HEALTHY: DOs AND DON'Ts

- DO wash your vaginal area every day. Use mild soap. Rinse well and pat dry.
- DO wipe your vagina and anus from front to back to avoid spreading germs.
- DON'T douche—it upsets the natural balance of the vagina. Most doctors and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) suggest that women steer clear of douching. Douching may make a woman more prone to vaginal infections.
- DO take antibiotic medicine only when needed. Antibiotics can kill “good” bacteria in the vagina.
- DO limit your number of sex partners. Always use condoms with a new partner or with more than one partner.
- DO wear cotton or cotton-lined underpants.
- DON'T wear tight pants.
- DON'T wear pantyhose in hot weather.
- DO see your healthcare provider if you notice any unusual discharge (wetness) or smell.

Latex condoms, when used consistently and correctly, are effective at reducing the risk of transmission of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. Latex condoms can reduce—but not totally eliminate—the risk of HPV transmission.

STI Resource Center
Monday - Friday, 9 am to 6 pm ET
919-361-8488

www.ashasexualhealth.org
www.iwannaknow.org (for teens)
www.quierosaber.org (en español)
www.nccc-online.org

The American Sexual Health Association (ASHA) promotes the sexual health of individuals, families and communities by advocating sound policies and practices and educating the public, professionals and policy makers, in order to foster healthy sexual behaviors and relationships and prevent adverse health outcomes.

If you are a healthcare provider and would like to see our full range of available materials, please visit our online catalog at www.ashapublications.org or call ASHA Customer Service at 1-800-783-9877 or email us at customerservice@ashasexualhealth.org.



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VAG 06-2014

VAGINITIS

BACTERIAL VAGINOSIS

TRICHOMONIASIS



What is vaginitis?

Vaginitis refers to the infections women can get in their vaginas from different germs. Most women have vaginitis at least once in their lives. The symptoms and amount of discomfort may vary. The most common kinds of vaginitis are bacterial vaginosis (BV), yeast and trichomoniasis (trich).

Causes of vaginitis

The healthy vagina holds a balance of many kinds of bacteria—some “good” and some “bad”—and yeast. A healthy vagina makes a discharge that is slippery and clear or whitish when moist, and may turn yellowish when dried. It may be thicker during some parts of the month. Healthy, natural wetness has little odor.

“Good” bacteria in the vagina help keep the “bad” bacteria from growing too quickly. When there is more bad bacteria than good bacteria, the bad bacteria take over and cause infections. One sign of an infection in the vagina is unhealthy discharge. Unhealthy discharge may have an odd color (yellow, greenish, gray or thick white) or smell (fishy, strong or unpleasant).

Bad bacteria and other germs can be spread through:

- Sex
- Antibiotics
- Pregnancy
- Douching
- Damp underwear
- Tight pants
- Perfumed soaps, feminine sprays and lubricants

BACTERIAL VAGINOSIS

Bacterial vaginosis (BV) is the most common kind of vaginitis. It is hard to know why a woman gets BV. Some women get well without treatment, but others develop more serious problems that may be linked to BV.

Symptoms: Most women have no symptoms. If a woman does have symptoms, they may include:

- A strong, fishy smell, especially after sex
- White or gray discharge
- Watery or foamy discharge
- Itching in or around the vagina
- Pain when peeing

Treatment: A healthcare provider can prescribe medicine to treat BV. In most cases, male sex partners

IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE VAGINITIS

If you think you have vaginitis, you may need to see your healthcare provider to know whether you might have bacterial vaginosis, trichomoniasis or a yeast infection. To help your healthcare provider find out what you have takes a little bit of planning.

- Do plan the exam when you're not having your monthly period.
- Don't have sex for two days before the exam.
- Do be ready to tell your healthcare provider when you had your last period.

do not need to be treated for BV. However, for women who have sex with women, female partners should be treated.

Risks: BV may cause babies to be born early or with low birth weight. BV can also increase a woman's chance of getting HIV or other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) if she is exposed.

TRICHOMONIASIS

Trichomoniasis (also called trich) is spread by having sex with someone who has the infection (but they may not know they have it). It is the most common, curable STI in young, sexually active women. More than one million new cases occur each year in the U.S.

Symptoms: For both men and women, symptoms can occur 4 to 20 days after sex with an infected partner, but many women and most men never have symptoms.

Women: Symptoms women may experience include:

- Discharge that is green, yellow or gray
- A bad smell
- Itching in or around the vagina
- Pain during sex
- Pain while peeing

Men: Most men with trich do not have signs or symptoms, however, some men may have a pain inside

