

VAGINITIS (BACTERIAL)

TO YOUR HEALTH - PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT

10.9

DESCRIPTION

Vaginitis means infection or inflammation of the vagina. Nonspecific vaginitis implies that any of several infecting organisms, including gardnerella, escherichia coli, mycoplasma, streptococci, staphylococci, have caused the infection. These infections and others may be contagious. Vaginitis can affect all ages, but most often occurs during the reproductive years.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Severity of the following symptoms varies between women and from time to time in the same woman:

- Vaginal discharge that has an unpleasant odor.
- Increased vaginal discharge
- Genital swelling, burning and itching.
- Vaginal discomfort.
- Discomfort during sexual intercourse.

CAUSES

- The organisms normally present in the vagina can multiply and cause infection when the pH and hormone balance of the vagina and surrounding tissue are disturbed. This can occur from frequent douching.

The following conditions increase the likelihood of infections:

- General poor health.
- Hot weather, non-ventilating clothing especially underwear or any other condition that increases genital moisture, warmth and darkness, these foster the growth of bacteria.
- Poor hygiene

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Diabetes mellitus.
- Menopause.
- Illness that has lowered resistance.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Keep genital area clean. Use plain unscented soap. Be sure sexual partner uses good hygiene.
- Take showers rather than tub baths.
- Wear cotton underpants or panty hose with a cotton crotch.
- Don't sit around in wet clothing, especially a wet bathing suit.

- After urination or bowel movements, cleanse by wiping or washing from front to back (vagina to anus).
- Lose weight if you are obese.
- Avoid vaginal douches, deodorants and bubble baths.
- If you have diabetes, adhere strictly to your treatment program.
- Change tampons or pads frequently.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

Usually curable within two weeks with treatment.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

Discomfort and decreased pleasure with sexual activity. May indicate an underlying disorder, such as diabetes or infection of reproductive organs.

GENERAL MEASURES

Diagnostic tests may include laboratory studies of vaginal discharge and pelvic examination. It is best not to do self-treatment for the disorder until the specific cause is determined. Don't douche unless advised by your medical provider.

MEDICATION

Oral or vaginal medication

ACTIVITY & DIET

Avoid overexertion, heat and excessive sweating. Delay sexual relations until after treatment. No special diet.

NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF...

- Symptoms persist longer than one week or worsen, despite treatment.
- Unusual vaginal bleeding or swelling develops.
- Severe lower abdominal or pelvic pain.
- Fever

Student Health Center



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This information is for educational purposes only. Consult your doctor for specific medical advice, diagnosis and treatment.

618-453-3311

Dial-A-Nurse is available after-hours until 10:30 p.m. during fall and spring semesters. In case of emergency dial 911.