



Women's Health Portal Self-Care

SELF-CARE for Vaginal Infections

In most women, it is normal to have a little bit of odorless discharge from the vagina. However, discharge that is cottage cheese like, greenish yellow, gray, contains blood, or has a bad/fishy odor may signal an infection that requires medical attention. In addition, seek medical care if you have symptoms such as itching, redness, pain or swelling. (See also Urinary Tract Infections and Menstrual Symptoms, <https://phc.amedd.army.mil/topics/healthyliving/wh/Pages/Women'sHealthPortal-SelfCare.aspx>).

This document provides basic information on prevention of vaginal infections and when to seek care. For 24/7 support and guidance, use the Military Health Systems (MHS) Nurse Advice Line at 1-800-TRICARE (1-800-874-2273, select option 1).

Self-Care Measures

You can take these self-care measures to help prevent vaginal infections.

- » Avoid taking baths using scented soaps and bath products.
- » Avoid using scented feminine hygiene products such as powders and sprays.
- » Do not wipe with baby wipes or scented toilet paper after you use the toilet.
- » Use warm water and unscented non-soap cleanser to wash your vulva (the vulva is the area of skin around the outside of the vagina).
- » Avoid douching (putting liquid inside the vagina to rinse it out).
- » Wear cotton underwear and keep the area as dry as possible.
- » Change sanitary products every 2 to 3 hours during your period.
- » Avoid tobacco products.
- » Avoid sharing sex toys. If used, clean toys between uses.
- » Use a condom during intercourse until the problem has cleared up.

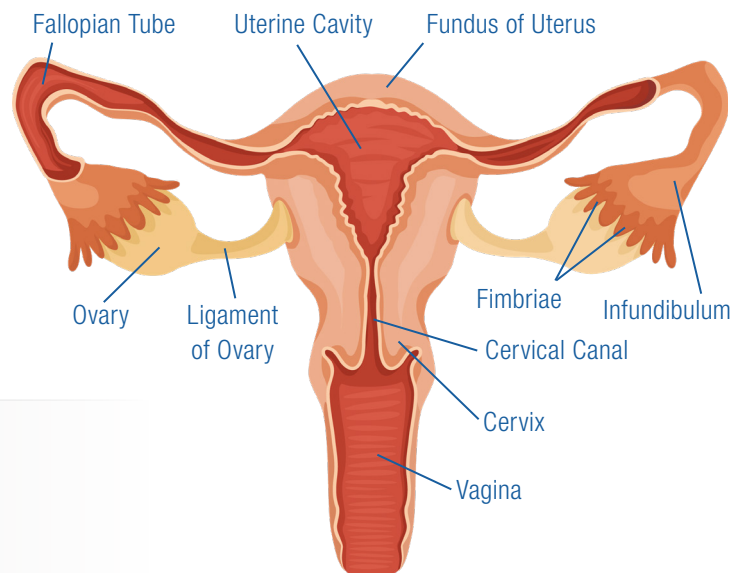
Contact Your Primary Care Provider if You Have:

- » Itching, redness, pain, rash, swelling of the vagina and/or the area around the vagina.
- » Discharge that is greenish-yellow, or gray, or contains blood.
- » Discharge that is thick and white, or cottage cheese like or thin and watery.
- » Pain and/or bleeding during sex.
- » A burning feeling in your vagina.
- » Bad or fishy smelling vaginal discharge.
- » Mild lower abdominal pain that comes and goes and lasts more than 24 hours.

Seek Immediate Care If You:

- » Are or think you could be pregnant.
- » Have SEVERE abdominal pain.
- » Have constant abdominal pain for 2 hours or more.
- » Have yellow or green vaginal discharge and a fever.

Female Reproductive System



Women's Health Portal: <https://phc.amedd.army.mil/topics/healthyliving/wh/Pages/default.aspx>



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SOURCES

- <https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003158.htm>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/candidiasis/genital/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/std/bv/default.htm>