

## Vaginal Symptoms

### Vaginal Symptoms may Include:

- Vaginal discharge
- Itching
- Burning
- Odor
- Irritation
- Abdominal bloating and fullness
- Pelvic or abdominal pain

### Home Care:

#### **\*\*Follow the recommended dosage on the package label\*\***

- Cool compresses to help with vulvar itching.
- Daytime antihistamine such as Claritin/loratadine, Zyrtec/cetirizine, and Allegra/fexofenadine  
May be purchased over the counter at a local store. These medications will decrease itching of skin.
- At bedtime, take Diphenhydramine (Benadryl) for itching (may cause drowsiness, use caution while driving)

**Risk factors:** Conditions that change the balance of bacteria in the vagina can increase your risk of vaginal bacterial or yeast infection, such as:

- Sexual activity and intercourse
- Numerous sexual partners
- Unprotected sex
- Stress
- Cigarette smoking
- Bubble baths
- Poor hygiene
- Menstrual fluids
- Increased intake of sugary foods/drinks
- Use of sprays or powders on your vagina
- Douching or vaginal washes
- Alcohol intake (beer contains yeast)
- Oral sex (mouth bacteria)
- Sex toys or objects in vagina

### Preventions

- If you are experiencing recurrent vaginal infections, you may want to consider using a probiotic such as:
  - Eating yogurt with active yeast cultures
  - Florajen (oral) – per packaging instructions
  - Acidophilus (oral) – per packaging instructions
  - RepHresh Pro-B (oral) – per packaging instructions
  - RepHresh Vaginal Gel – per packaging instructions
- Use warm water (no soap) to wash your vulva (the vulva is the area of skin around the outside of the vagina). Do not scrub. Dry the area well because the moisture is used by microorganisms to grow.
- Avoid sex until symptoms are gone.
- Use condoms including dental dam with oral sex
- Take baths in plain warm water, and avoid scented bath products, including bubble baths
- Avoid sprays or powders on your vagina
- Avoid douching (douching is when a woman puts a liquid inside her vagina to rinse it out)
- Avoid wiping with baby wipes or scented toilet paper
- Before oral sex, use dental floss, brush teeth, and rinse any foods and beverages from your mouth
- Avoid the ingestion of sugary foods and drinks. Increase water intake.
- Wear loose and light clothing. Change cotton underwear every day. Avoid thong underwear.
- Change pads or tampons at least three times a day to prevent bacterial growth.

	<b>BV</b> (Bacterial Vaginosis)	<b>Yeast Infection</b> (Vaginal Candidiasis)	<b>Trichomoniasis</b> (Trichomonas vaginalis)
<b>Cause</b>	Bacteria	Yeast	Parasitic trichomonads
<b>Vaginal Odor</b>	“Fishy” or musty Unpleasant	None	“Fishy” Unpleasant
<b>Vaginal Itching/ Irritation</b>	Sometimes present  (Often Accompanies Urination or Sexual Intercourse)	Usually present	Usually present and pronounced
<b>Vaginal Discharge</b>	Thin Milky white or gray	Thick Cottage cheese-like White	Frothy Yellow-green
<b>Treatment</b>	Requires specific antibacterial treatment, available only by prescription	First-time symptoms must be diagnosed by a healthcare professional  Recurrent infections can be treated with over-the-counter preparations such as: Miconazole Vaginal cream	Requires specific antibacterial treatment, available only by prescription

\*Sometimes more than one infection may be present,  
so examination by a qualified healthcare provider is needed.

**Please call to make an appointment at your on-campus Student Health Services Clinic or with your PCP or go to Urgent Care or the Emergency Department if your concerns do not improve with conservative self-care treatment or if you have worsening symptoms.**

**Please know your health problem and allergies. Information contained in this handout is for educational purposes only. It is not a substitute for evaluation and treatment by a Healthcare professional. As new and updated information becomes available, the content may change. Please contact your Healthcare Provider or your on-campus Student Health Services Clinic with any questions.**

Vaginal Symptoms self care handout  
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