

SYMPTOM RELIEF

After sex: Clean the vulva with warm water to decrease irritation.

Ointments/Creams: Call your provider prior to starting any over-the-counter ointments or creams.

Baking Soda Baths: Add 1/4 cup of baking soda to a warm water bath that goes to your hips and soak for 10 minutes to relieve itching and burning.

Vulvar Skin Protectant: Adding a small (pea size) amount to your vulva can protect from rubbing and decrease skin irritation during a period or while peeing. Examples of protectant include:

- Extra virgin olive oil
- Coconut oil
- Vaseline or other white petroleum (unscented)



A QUICK GUIDE TO IMPROVING YOUR VAGINAL HEALTH

VAGINAL AND VULVAR HEALTH



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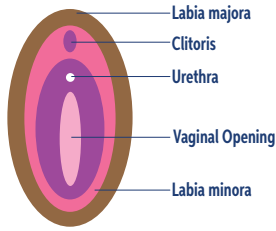
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FAST FACTS

Anatomy

VULVA : Outside portion of your genitals

VAGINA : Inside tube from uterus (womb) to the vulva



pH: A Balancing Act

Yeast and bacteria are both needed to maintain a healthy vagina, we call this “**vaginal flora**.” This is mainly done by keeping a low vaginal pH. When the pH is off, bacteria or yeast can overgrow causing vaginal symptoms.

WHAT is NORMAL?

- It is normal to have clear-to-white vaginal discharge that changes throughout the month.
- Your vagina has a unique smell that should not be overpowering; the use of certain soaps or perfumes can cause a pH change and lead to a smell that is NOT normal.
- Your vulva has a unique shape, normal to you.

WHAT is NOT NORMAL?

- Vaginal discharge that is clumpy, green, or yellow.
- Vaginal odor that is foul-smelling, sour, or fishy.
- Vaginal itching, pain, or a big change to your bleeding or bleeding after sex.

Tips for keeping your vulva and vagina healthy include avoiding:

Rubbing

Moisture

Irritation from Chemicals

SEVEN HEALTHCARE TIPS FOR YOUR VAGINA AND VULVA

1. General Maintenance

- Avoid toilet paper with smells or extra additives, including aloe or “extra-soft.”
- Chronic dampness? Carry an extra set of underwear to change into.
- Do not wear a daily pad or use powders to absorb moisture.
- Eating yogurt with probiotics can help maintain healthy vaginal flora.
- Sleep naked or use loose cotton underwear from the waist down to help with air circulation.

2. Clothing

- Use 100% cotton underwear to let your skin breathe, keep cool, and decrease bacteria or yeast growth.
- Avoid thongs, tights, or leggings. They trap moisture.
- Laundry detergents should be free of scents, dyes, and harsh chemicals.
- Do not use fabric softeners or dryer sheets.

3. Cleaning Up

- Do not wash inside your vagina – it is self-cleaning. Wash your vulva with plain water using fingers instead of a washcloth. If you need to use soap, use an unscented, gentle soap such as:
 - Dove Sensitive Skin
 - Basis
 - Dial Clean + Gentle
- No douching, it gets rid of the good bacteria and increases your chance of infection.
- Bathing and changing clothes after working out or sweating on a hot day keeps moisture to a minimum.
- No bubble baths, bath oils, or bath salts/bombs.

4. Menstrual Hygiene

- Do not use any tampons or pads with “extras” like scents or lotions. Change your tampon/pad every four hours or at least four times a day.
- Do not use hygiene sprays or baby wipes.
- Cleanse vulva daily during a period.

5. Sex Tips

- Use silicone or silicone/water blend lubricant to stay moisturized during sex. Avoid lubricants or condoms with:

- **Dye**
- **Glycerin**
- **Scents**
- **Petroleum**

- Use condoms with anal play to limit irritating bacteria being introduced into your vagina, make sure to use new condoms for each position change.
- Peeing after sex can decrease your chance of getting a urinary tract infection (UTI).

6. Shaving

- If you shave, use soap, a clean razor, and a mirror as a guide; stop shaving if you notice red bumps or itchiness.
- Other hair-removal options include clip the pubic hair, have a professional wax, or do laser hair therapy.
- Do not use any chemicals (creams or gels) for hair removal.

7. Testing

- Sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing is an important part of maintaining your sexual and physical health, especially with new partners or if you are having symptoms.
- If you think you need testing, talk to the clinic about symptoms you are having and avoid over-the-counter treatment before seeing a provider.