

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON HEALTH CENTER

-HEALTHBERRY-

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Vaginitis

Vaginal itching or burning and vaginal discharge can be a sign of many different diseases. The most common are bacterial vaginitis and yeast vaginitis. The more serious infections are those caused by sexually transmitted diseases.

Yeast infections (vaginal candidiasis) are indicated when the discharge is very thick and white and there is a great deal of itching and external irritation. Risk factors for developing this infection are pregnancy, antibiotic use, diabetes, and use of a diaphragm or spermicidal jellies. Yeast infections can be treated with intravaginal medications available without a prescription and should be used every night for seven nights in a row. Alternatively, your doctor may prescribe Diflucan, a tablet taken by mouth one time.

Bacterial Vaginitis (BV) is caused by an overgrowth of bacteria that are normally found in the vagina. Symptoms are itching, burning, and a thin, off-white discharge that often smells bad or "fishy." This infection can develop in women who do not have sexual intercourse; but risk factors for development of BV are sexual intercourse, douching, and pregnancy. BV can be treated with antibiotics taken by mouth or by intravaginal medication but both treatments must be obtained by prescription.

Sexually transmitted diseases such as trichomoniasis, chlamydia, and gonorrhea can also cause vaginal itching, burning, or discharge; but may also be accompanied by abdominal or pelvic pain, fever, and nausea and vomiting. When infection ascends to the upper part of the reproductive tract and pelvis, it is called Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID). It is very important to be examined and tested for these diseases if any of these symptoms are present and you are sexually active, especially if condoms are not used every time. About 1 in 10 women will develop PID and it is the most common cause of female infertility and chronic pelvic pain and increases the risk for tubal pregnancies (which can be life threatening).

If you have questions about any of these diseases or symptoms, your health care provider at the Health Center is ready to help you.



Healthfully yours,

Dr. Healthberry

For questions or comments you can;

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