

Vaginal discharge

By Sonia Fulton

What is Vaginal discharge?

- ▶ Vaginal discharge is normal !
- ▶ If you have a womb, cervix and vagina you will get discharge



- ▶ Your uterus, cervix and vagina produce vaginal discharge, which is mainly made up of cells and bacteria. It helps clean and lubricate your vagina, and helps fight off bad bacteria and infection. Changes to your discharge can be a sign of infection or disease.



The Colors and Consistencies of Vaginal Discharge (and What They Mean)



Clear

Healthy (Note: You might see more of it during exercise or when aroused)



Milky White

Healthy (Note: if chunky, could be a yeast infection)



Gray

Could be Bacterial Vaginosis, aka BV



Bright Yellow

Could be an STI



Green

Could be an STD or BV



Pink

Pregnancy, injury, or the start of your period



Red

Your period, spotting, an infection, or a miscarriage



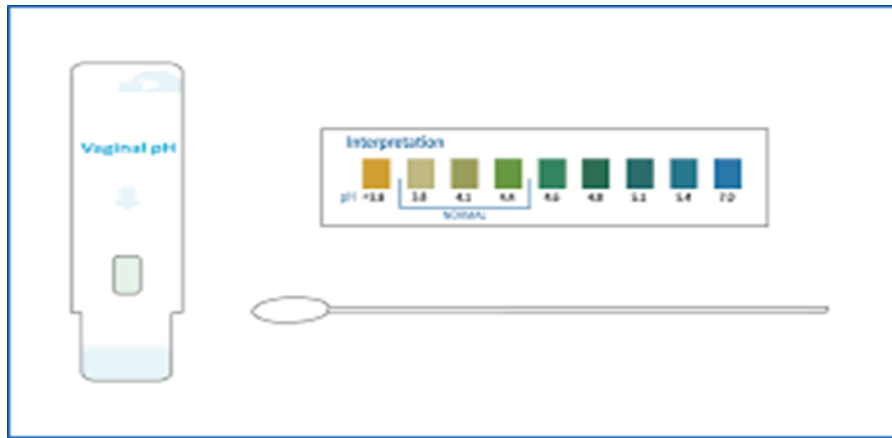
Brown

An infection or the end of your period



Watery

Ovulation or sexual arousal



PH in the vagina should be between
3.8 - 4.5

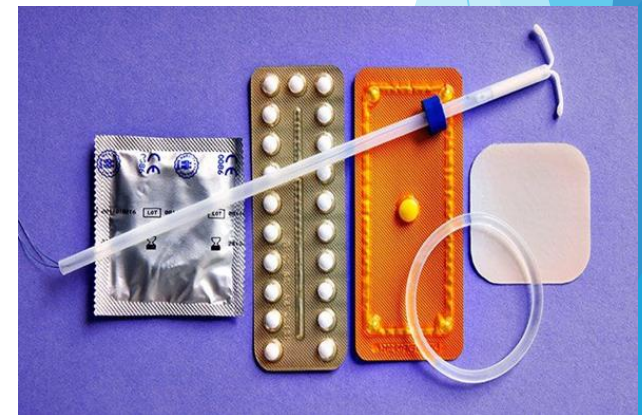
Acidic vaginal environment protects
from unhealthy bacteria



- ▶ If you have a 28-day menstrual cycle, your cervical mucus will generally follow this pattern:
- ▶ Days 1-4 after your period ends: Dry or tacky. It can be white or yellow-tinged.
- ▶ Days 4-6: Sticky. Slightly damp and white.
- ▶ Days 7-9: Creamy, yogurt-like consistency. Wet and cloudy.
- ▶ Days 10-14: Stretchy and resembles raw egg whites. Slippery and very wet.
- ▶ Days 14-28: Dry until menstruation occurs.
- ▶ Most women with a 28-day cycle ovulate around day 14. This is why your cervical mucus is slippery, stretchy and highly fertile just before the egg is released.

What can cause a change in discharge?

- ▶ Breastfeeding.
- ▶ Sexual lubricants.
- ▶ Hormonal contraception
- ▶ Sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- ▶ Other vaginal infections like yeast infections or bacterial vaginosis.
- ▶ Surgery on your cervix.
- ▶ Medications.
- ▶ Stress and diet.
- ▶ Have untreated or under-treated diabetes.
- ▶ Are taking antibiotic medicine.
- ▶ Have an HIV infection or have a decreased immunity.
- ▶ Use certain soaps, sprays or detergents.
- ▶ Douche.



THRUSH

- ▶ Thrush is a common yeast infection that affects men and women. It's usually harmless but it can be uncomfortable and keep coming back. It is not classed as a sexually transmitted infection (STI). white vaginal discharge (often like cottage cheese), which does not usually smell
- ▶ itching and irritation around the vagina
- ▶ soreness and stinging during sex or when you urinate



- ▶ You'll usually need antifungal medicine to get rid of thrush. This can be a tablet you take, a tablet you insert into your vagina (pessary) or a cream to relieve the irritation.
- ▶ Thrush should clear up within 7 to 14 days of starting treatment.
- ▶ You do not need to treat partners unless they have symptoms.



Recurring Thrush



- ▶ You might need to take treatment for longer (for up to 6 months) if you keep getting thrush (you get it more than 4 times in 12 months).
- ▶ A pharmacist can help with thrush
- ▶ A pharmacist can recommend the best treatment for you. Ask if they have a private area to talk if you're embarrassed.
- ▶ You should not use antifungal medicine more than twice in 6 months without speaking to a pharmacist or doctor.



Bacterial Vaginosis

- ▶ Bacterial vaginosis is caused by a change in the natural balance of bacteria in your vagina.
- ▶ What causes this to happen is not fully known, but you're more likely to get it if:
 - ▶ you're sexually active (but women who have not had sex can also get bacterial vaginosis)
 - ▶ you have had a change of partner
 - ▶ you have an IUD (contraception device)
 - ▶ you use perfumed products in or around your vagina
- ▶ Bacterial vaginosis is not an STI, even though it can be triggered by sex.
- ▶ A woman can pass it to another woman during sex.





SELF CARE

- ▶ Use water and emollient (like E45 cream) instead of soap to wash the affected area
- ▶ Dry properly after washing
- ▶ Wear cotton underwear
- ▶ Avoid sex until thrush has cleared up if sex is uncomfortable



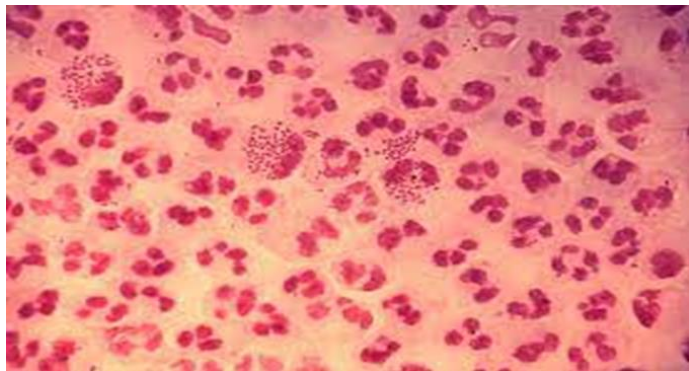
Trichomonas Vaginalis

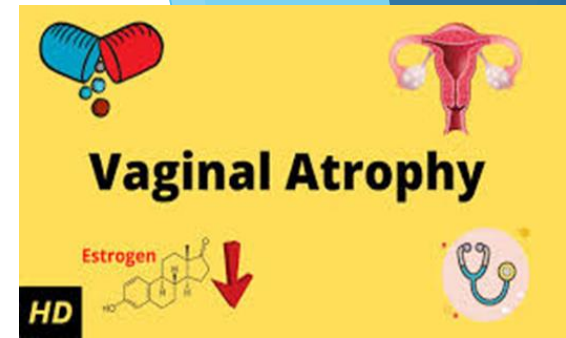
- ▶ Trichomonas is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) you get from having sex with an infected person. A parasite causes trichomoniasis. It makes your vaginal discharge green, yellow or gray and bubbly or frothy. It's treated with antibiotics.



Gonorrhoea and chlamydia

- ▶ Chlamydia and gonorrhoea are two common STIs you can get from having sex with an infected person. Some people with these infections have cloudy, yellow or green vaginal discharge. If left untreated, the infection may spread, causing pelvic inflammatory disease with pelvic pain.





- ▶ Vaginal discharge is not always caused by an infection. Changes in the normal balance of healthy bacteria in your vagina and sexual excitement can also cause vaginal discharge.
- ▶ An object in or near the vagina that shouldn't be there. For example, you may leave a tampon inside your vagina.
- ▶ An irritation or rash from something (an object or chemical) that causes an allergic reaction. This could be from detergents, soaps, sexual lubricants or materials used in condoms or sex toys.
- ▶ A condition called atrophic vaginitis. This can happen after menopause when there is a decrease in oestrogen. The lower levels of oestrogen cause the walls of the vagina to become dry and thinner than normal.
- ▶ During pregnancy, you produce more discharge because it helps protect you from infection.

