

Vaginitis

What is vaginitis?

Vaginitis (va-jih-NI-tis) is a condition that causes itching, burning, irritation, odor, and discharge from the vagina. Your doctor can tell if you have it by examining you and doing some tests.

There are three common types: bacterial vaginosis (va-jih-NO-sis), vulvovaginal candidiasis (vul-vo-VA-jih-nal CAN-dih-DI-uh-sis), and trichomoniasis (TRIK-oh-mo-NI-uh-sis).

There are other causes of vaginitis that are not as common. For example, women who have low estrogen levels after menopause may have atrophic (ah-TRO-fik) vaginitis. An allergic reaction can also cause vaginitis.

What are the symptoms?

Bacterial vaginosis happens when there are too many normal bacteria growing in the vagina. This may cause gray discharge with a fishy odor.

Vulvovaginal candidiasis is a fungal yeast infection. This may cause itchy, thick, white discharge; burning; or redness of the genital area.

Trichomoniasis is a sexually transmitted disease. The most common symptom is a frothy green or yellow discharge, with or without pain.

Even if you have these symptoms and think you know which type of vaginitis you have, your doctor will need to examine you to find out for sure.

How is vaginitis treated?

Bacterial vaginosis—Your doctor may offer you oral pills or a vaginal cream. Your sex partner usually will not need to be treated.

Vulvovaginal candidiasis—Your doctor may recommend vaginal cream, vaginal pills, or oral pills. Your sex partner does not need to be treated.

Trichomoniasis—Oral pills can treat this infection. Your sex partner should also be treated. Your doctor may test you again in three months to see if you have been infected again.

Where can I get more information?

AAFP's Patient Information Resource
<https://familydoctor.org/condition/vaginal-discharge/>

Mayo Clinic
<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/vaginitis/home/ovc-20258665>

Medline Plus
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000897.htm>

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