

UAB Health Education

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

VAGINITIS (YEAST INFECTION, BACTERIAL VAGINOSIS)



Vaginitis is anything that causes inflammation of the vagina. The most common vaginal infections are candida vaginitis and bacterial vaginosis. Candida vaginitis, commonly called a yeast infection, is caused by fungi. Occasionally, the fungi which are naturally present in the vagina, can overgrow and cause symptoms. A common trigger is recent antibiotic use which kills off natural bacteria and allows the fungi to overgrow. Bacterial vaginosis is also caused by an overgrowth of naturally-present microbes, in this case bacteria. This happens when the vaginal pH balance is upset. It can be difficult to distinguish the two causes of vaginitis without a physical exam.

DIAGNOSIS

Your provider will ask you about your symptoms and will do a physical exam. You or your provider may also collect a swab of your vaginal discharge.

	CAUSE	SYMPTOMS	TREATMENT
CANDIDA VAGINITIS	Overgrowth candida yeast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Itching/burning of vagina and surrounding skin Swelling and redness of skin surrounding vagina Thick, white discharge that may look like cottage cheese Burning with urination or sexual intercourse 	Over-the-counter vaginal antifungal cream such as clotrimazole (Monistat) or prescription pill, fluconazole (Diflucan)
BACTERIAL VAGINOSIS	Overgrowth bacteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gray, frothy, foul-smelling vaginal discharge Itching around vaginal opening Burning with urination 	Antibiotics (oral or vaginal)

Other considerations:

- If your period begins while using intra-vaginal medications, continue using the medication but do not use tampons until you complete your treatment.
- If using oral antibiotics for bacterial vaginosis treatment, do not consume alcohol during the treatment period.

RESOURCES

FamilyDoctor.org <https://familydoctor.org/is-it-a-cold-or-the-flu/>

Mayo Clinic <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/flu/symptoms-causes/syc-20351719>

CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

RISK FACTORS

- Menstruation
- Pregnancy
- Medications: Antibiotics, steroids
- Uncontrolled diabetes
- Constant moisture or irritation of the vagina
- Douching
- Having new or multiple sex partners

PREVENTION

- Avoid douching, feminine hygiene sprays, deodorants or bubble bath.
- Wash the vulva regularly with mild soap and water, rinse well, and dry thoroughly.
- Wear cotton underwear, avoid tight-fitting clothing and change pads and tampons regularly.
- Do not sit in wet swimsuit or damp clothes.
- Limit number of sexual partners. Use condoms, counters and doorknobs with antibacterial disinfectant