

# WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT VAGINITIS AND CERVICITIS

## What are vaginitis and cervicitis?

- Vaginitis is an inflammation of the vagina. Cervicitis is an inflammation of the cervix (the cervix connects the vagina and the uterus).
- Vaginitis can cause itching, irritation, discharge, or odor. Cervicitis may have no symptoms, or there may be abnormal bleeding, discharge, or pain, especially during sex.
- Vaginitis is not serious, except if you are pregnant or having gynecologic surgery.
- If cervicitis is not treated, it can lead to a serious infection called pelvic inflammatory disease. This could cause problems, such as infertility and tubal pregnancy.
- Both vaginitis and cervicitis are common.
- Vaginitis can be caused by a yeast infection, bacteria, or trichomoniasis. An allergy to bath products, birth control used in the vagina, damp or tight clothing, and not having enough estrogen are other causes.
- Vaginitis can also occur because of overgrowth of bacteria that are normally in the vagina. This is called bacterial vaginosis.
- Cervicitis is caused by chlamydia, gonorrhea, and herpes simplex virus, which are all sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

## How can I prevent vaginitis and cervicitis?

- Do not have too many sexual partners and use condoms every time you have sex.



- If you get treatment for an STI, ask your partner also.
- To keep from getting yeast infections, don't take antibiotics unless you really need them. If you are diabetic keep a good blood sugar level.
- To keep from getting vaginitis, don't use douches or feminine sprays.

## What is the treatment for vaginitis or cervicitis?

- These conditions are usually treated with an antibiotic pill or a vaginal cream. Different antibiotics treat different types of infections.
- Douches and treatments with a yogurt base or that make the vagina more acidic do not work.

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## For More Information

### Web Sites with Good Information on Vaginitis and Cervicitis

[www.acog.org/publications/patient\\_education/bp028.cfm](http://www.acog.org/publications/patient_education/bp028.cfm)  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists' brochure, "Vaginitis: Causes and Treatment"

[www.acog.org/publications/patient\\_education/bp009.cfm](http://www.acog.org/publications/patient_education/bp009.cfm)  
Access the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists' brochure, "How to Prevent Sexually Transmitted Diseases."

[www.cdc.gov/std/Gonorrhea/STDFact-gonorrhea.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/std/Gonorrhea/STDFact-gonorrhea.htm)  
Access information on gonorrhea from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[www.cdc.gov/std/Chlamydia/STDFact-Chlamydia.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/std/Chlamydia/STDFact-Chlamydia.htm)  
Access information on chlamydia from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[www.cdc.gov/std/PID/STDFact-PID.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/std/PID/STDFact-PID.htm)  
Access information on pelvic inflammatory disease from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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