Vaginal Symptoms

Vaginal Symptoms may Include:
- Vaginal discharge
- Itching
- Burning
- Odor
- Irritation
- Abdominal bloating and fullness

Home Care:
**Follow the recommended dosage on the package label**
- Cool compresses to help with vulvar itching.
- Daytime antihistamine such as Claritin/loratadine, Zyrtec/cetirizine, and Allegra/fexofenadine
  May be purchased over the counter at a local store. These medications will decrease itching of skin.
- At bedtime, take Diphenhydramine (generic Benadryl) for itching (may cause drowsiness, use caution while driving)

Risk factors: Conditions that change the balance of bacteria in the vagina can increase your risk of vaginal bacterial or yeast infection, such as:
- Sexual activity and intercourse
- Numerous sexual partners
- Unprotected sex
- Stress
- Cigarette smoking
- Bubble baths
- Poor hygiene
- Menstrual fluids
- Increased intake of sugary foods/drinks
- Use of sprays or powders on your vagina
- Doucheing
- Alcohol intake (beer contains yeast)
- Oral sex (mouth bacteria)

Preventions
- If you are experiencing recurrent vaginal infections, you may want to consider using a probiotic such as:
  - Yogurt
  - Florajen (oral) – per packaging instructions
  - Acidophilus (oral) – per packaging instructions
  - RepHresh Pro-B (oral) – per packaging instructions
  - RepHresh Vaginal Gel – per packaging instructions
- Use warm water and unscented non-soap cleanser to wash your vulva (the vulva is the area of skin around the outside of the vagina). Do not scrub. Dry the area well because the moisture is used by microorganisms to grow.
- Limit sex with only one partner
- Use condoms
- Take birth control (the estrogen leads to more good bacteria)
- Take baths in plain warm water, and avoid scented bath products, no bubble baths
- Avoid sprays or powders on your vagina
- Avoid douching (douching is when a woman puts a liquid inside her vagina to rinse it out)
- Avoid wiping with baby wipes or scented toilet paper
- Before oral sex, use dental dam and floss, brush, and rinse any foods and beverages from your mouth
- Avoid the ingestion of sugary foods and drinks. Increase water intake.
- Wear loose and light clothing. Change cotton underwear every day.
- Change pads or tampons at least three times a day to prevent bacterial growth.
### Signs and Symptoms of the Most Common Vaginal Infections*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BV (Bacterial Vaginosis)</th>
<th>Yeast Infection (Vaginal Candidiasis)</th>
<th>Trichomoniasis (Trichomonas vaginalis)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cause</strong></td>
<td>Bacteria</td>
<td>Yeast</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Vaginal Odor</strong></td>
<td>“Fishy” or musty Unpleasant</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>**Vaginal Itching/</td>
<td>Sometimes present (Often Accompanies</td>
<td>Usually present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irritation**</td>
<td>Urination or Sexual Intercourse)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Vaginal Discharge</strong></td>
<td>Thin Milky white or gray</td>
<td>Thick Cottage cheese-like White</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Treatment</strong></td>
<td>Requires specific antibacterial</td>
<td>First-time symptoms may be diagnosed</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>treatment, available only by</td>
<td>by a healthcare professional</td>
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<td>prescription</td>
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</table>

*Sometimes more than one infection may be present, so examination by a qualified healthcare provider is needed.

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Please call to make an appointment at the Student Health Center or with your PCP or go to Urgent Care or the Emergency Department if your concerns do not improve with conservative self-care treatment or if you have worsening symptoms.

Please know your health problem and allergies. Information contained in this handout is for educational purposes only. It is not a substitute for evaluation and treatment by a Healthcare professional. As new and updated information becomes available, the content may change. Please contact your Healthcare Provider or the SHC Triage Nurse at 570-389-4451 with any questions. Updated August, 2019.