



# VAGINAL BLEEDING

Bleeding between menstrual periods, during pregnancy or after menopause

## CAUSES

### BIRTH CONTROL

Some forms of birth control such as the intrauterine device (a small device inserted in the uterus to prevent fertilization) or oral contraceptives may cause bleeding in between periods. Oral contraceptives should be taken religiously if it is to be effective. Missing two to three days may cause spotting.

#### Symptoms:

- Bleeding in between periods

#### DO:

- If taking birth control pills and missing days is the cause, resume taking the pills by following the instructions on the packet.
- Consult a physician if you are using an IUD.

#### DON'T:

- Don't be afraid to discuss symptoms with a doctor.

### MENOPAUSE

See page 117.

### MISCARRIAGE

A miscarriage is a pregnancy that ends by itself within the first 20 weeks (the first trimester), usually because the pregnancy is not developing normally.

A miscarriage can also be caused by infectious diseases contracted by the mother, or hormone deficiency. Sometimes, a miscarriage can happen late in the pregnancy and it may be caused by harmful chemical substances such as nicotine, caffeine, alcohol, etc.

#### Symptoms:

- Persistent bleeding
- Blood coming out in clots
- Severe cramps or pain in the center of the lower abdomen, with occasional back pain
- Offensive or unusual odor

#### DO:

- If a miscarriage is suspected, report to the doctor immediately.
- If bleeding is intense, seek emergency help.
- Hospitalization may be required to remove remaining fetal and placental tissue. If left unclean, these materials are toxic and fatal.
- Get regular exercise, maintain a healthy diet and get plenty of rest.

#### DON'T:

- Do not smoke or drink alcohol when pregnant. The fetus may develop serious health problems or may be spontaneously aborted if exposed to such harmful chemicals. Paint, insecticide and other such chemical substances should also be avoided.



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### ECTOPIC PREGNANCY

Ectopic pregnancy is a type of pregnancy wherein the fetus develops outside the uterus and often within the fallopian tubes. Regular check-ups with the doctor is important so that this kind of pregnancy is prevented from developing further. An ectopic pregnancy will eventually rupture the fallopian tube and cause severe internal bleeding. When diagnosed early, the fetus will have to be removed.

#### Symptoms:

- Sharp pain in the abdomen or pelvis which may be intermittent or constant
- Irregular vaginal bleeding often after a skipped period
- Abdominal tenderness
- Dizziness or fainting

#### DO:

- Seek emergency help.

#### DON'T:

- Don't be afraid to discuss symptoms with a doctor.

### OTHER CAUSES

Other causes may include cervical polyps, cervicitis or dysfunctional uterine bleeding.



## VAGINAL ITCH OR DISCHARGE

Vaginal itching; excessive, yellowish or greenish foul-smelling discharge

### CAUSES

#### YEAST INFECTION

Yeast infection is caused by the fungus *Candida albicans* and is extremely uncomfortable though not a very serious condition. It is triggered by a pH imbalance in the vaginal area which then causes yeast, a fungus normally present in that area, to reproduce rapidly. Certain medications, pregnancy, a weakened immune system, poor nutrition, stress, or illness may cause the pH level in the vagina to become imbalanced. It is a common problem for women and often recurs throughout a woman's lifetime.

#### Symptoms:

- Abnormally large quantity of white, yellow or green discharge with a foul odor
- Vaginal itch, burning sensation
- Pain when passing urine or during intercourse

#### DO:

- Avoid foods that are high in carbohydrates and yeast such as alcoholic beverages, cheese, dried fruits, melons, peanuts, potatoes, corn and yams. Try to eat more green, leafy vegetables, fish and poultry.
- Wear loose, cotton-made underpants and jeans.
- When suffering from yeast infection, separate underwear and wash in very hot water
- Women who engage in sexual activity must ensure that their partner is also treated for fungal infections.
- Maintain proper hygiene especially in during menstrual periods.

#### DON'T:

- Don't stay too long in a wet bathing suit . Shower immediately and dry thoroughly.
- Don't use public tubs.