



9910 W Loop 1604 N #124
San Antonio, TX 78254

Phone (210) 692-0358
Fax (210) 692-0359

Vaginitis in Children

Vaginitis refers to any inflammation or infection of the vagina. This is a common gynecological problem found in girls of all ages, with most having at least one form of vaginitis at some time during their lives. When the walls of the vagina become inflamed, because some irritant has disturbed the balance of the vaginal area, vaginitis can occur.

The following are the most common symptoms of vaginitis in children. However, each youngster may experience symptoms differently. Symptoms may include:

- vaginal itching
- vaginal burning
- vaginal discharge which may be clear or colored. It can be thin or thick, with or without an odor. A white, cottage cheese-like vaginal discharge is typically seen in candida vaginitis.
- occasionally girls complain of pelvic or abdominal pain

Most vaginal itching or discomfort is due to a soap irritation of the vulva. The usual irritants are bubble bath, shampoo, or soap left on the genital area after a bath. Occasionally, it is due to poor hygiene. Before puberty, the lining of the vulva is very thin and sensitive. If the vagina becomes infected, there will be a vaginal discharge. This problem almost always occurs before puberty.

Treatment includes:

- Baking soda, warm water soaks in a basin or bathtub of warm water for 20 minutes. Add 4 tablespoons of baking soda per tub of warm water. Be sure she spreads her legs and allows the water to cleanse the genital area. No soap should be used. This will remove any soap, concentrated urine, or other irritants from the genital area and promote healing
- Hydrocortisone cream Apply 1% hydrocortisone cream (a nonprescription item) to the genital area after the soaks on the advice of your child's doctor.
- Avoid bubble baths. Don't put any other soaps or shampoo into the bath water. Don't let a bar of soap float around in the bathtub. If you are going to shampoo your child's hair, do this at the end of the bath.
- Keep the bath time less than 15 minutes. Have your child urinate immediately after baths.
- Wear cotton underpants. Discourage wearing underpants during the night so the genital area has a chance to "air out."
- Teach your daughter to wipe herself correctly from front to back, especially after a bowel movement.
- Encourage her to drink enough fluids each day to keep the urine light-colored. Concentrated urine can be an irritant.

Vaginitis due to yeast infections are caused by one of the many species of fungus known as candida, which normally live in the vagina in small numbers. Since yeast is normally present and well-balanced in the vagina, infection occurs when something in a female's system upsets this normal balance. For example, an antibiotic to treat another infection may upset this balance. In this case, the antibiotic kills the bacteria that normally protects and balances the yeast in the vagina. In turn, the yeast overgrows, causing an infection. Other factors that can cause this imbalance to occur include taking steroids and diabetes, which allows too much sugar in the urine and vagina. Other causes of yeast overgrowth include wearing tightly fitting clothing and if the girl is around too much heat and moisture.

Symptoms may include:

- a thick, white, cottage cheese-like vaginal discharge that is watery and usually odorless
- itchiness and redness of the vulva and vagina
- burning on urination (dysuria)

The symptoms of a vaginal candida infection may resemble other conditions or medical problems. Therefore, parents should always consult with their child's physician for a diagnosis.

Prevention of candida vaginitis includes:

- Washing and rinsing your daughter's external genitals and bottom regularly
- Wearing clean underpants every day. Cotton panties with a cotton crotch are best.
- Avoiding vaginal spray deodorants and irritating soaps.
- Remind your daughter to wipe front to back, never back to front.

While yeast infections are the most commonly discussed vaginal infection, bacterial vaginitis (BV) is actually the most common type of vaginitis in females of reproductive age. This infection is caused by bacteria, not yeast. With a bacterial vaginitis infection, certain species of normal vaginal bacteria grow out of control and trigger inflammation.

The following are the most common symptoms of bacterial vaginitis. However, each adolescent may experience symptoms differently. Symptoms may include:

- a milky, thin discharge at times, or a heavy, gray discharge
- "fishy" odor of discharge

The symptoms of bacterial vaginitis may resemble other conditions. Always consult your physician for a diagnosis.

Call your doctor if the following occurs:

- Pain with urination
- Your child develops a fever or chills
- Presence of abdominal or back pain
- Your child can only pass small amounts of urine
- The urine becomes blood or cola colored
- Presence of vaginal discharge