

Every person is different. Learn what is normal for you.

Tips for a Healthy Vagina.

Vagina or Vulva? What's the difference?

The Vagina (inside part)

- Your vagina is the inside part of your genitals. You can see the opening only.
- Blood flows out of the vagina when you have your period.
- There is natural bacteria in your vagina that keeps it healthy and clean.

The vagina is an amazing part of your body that cleans itself!

- Everyone has a different smell. This is healthy and normal.
- Between periods, the vagina stays healthy and protects itself by making fluid, called “discharge”.
- Normal discharge can be clear, cloudy white or creamy.
- Sometimes there is more discharge than other times such as when you feel “turned on” (sexually aroused).

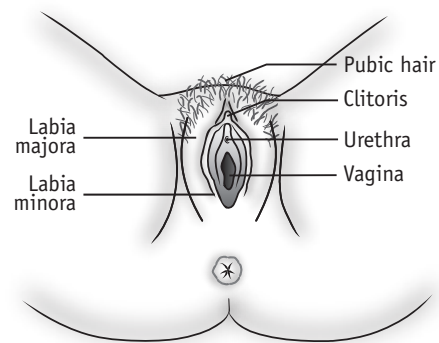
The Vulva (outside part)

Your vulva is the outside part of your genitals.

Your vulva has:

- Pubic hair
- Labia majora (outer lips)
- Clitoris
- Labia minora (inner lips)
- Urethra (where you pee from)
- Opening to the vagina

Your vulva is the part that you gently clean.



Your vagina does not need a lot of cleaning. Here are some tips for keeping it healthy:

General Care

- Change out of damp clothes like bathing suits, workout/yoga pants as soon as you can.
- Wash your vulva with plain water after having a bubble bath or hot tub.
- Do not use perfumes, powders or sprays on your vulva or in your vagina.
- Do not use scented products on your vulva or in your vagina.

Cleaning

You do not need special wipes or cleaners for your vulva and vagina. Save your money and follow these tips instead:

- Clean your vulva after you pee (urinate) or poo (have a bowel movement) by wiping with toilet tissue from front to back.
- Wash your vulva with warm, not hot, water and mild, unscented soap to get rid of sweat. You cannot wash away an infection.
- Do not wash your vulva too much. Once a day with mild soap is good enough.
- Do not scrub your vulva with a washcloth or loofah. Only use your hand.
- Do not clean the inside of your vagina. Do not douche. This changes the normal, healthy bacteria in your vagina.



Pubic Hair

Pubic hair is healthy and normal. Removing your pubic hair by shaving or waxing may increase your risk for skin infections.

Underwear

- Wear cotton underwear, it breathes better.
- Change underwear once a day.
- Do not sleep with your underwear on.
- Limit wearing thong underwear. If you do wear a thong, take it off when you get home. Do not wear a thong to sleep.

Tampons/Pads

- Use pads and tampons only when you have your period.
- Change tampons/pads when full and at least every 4–6 hours.
- Do not use scented pads or tampons.

Sex

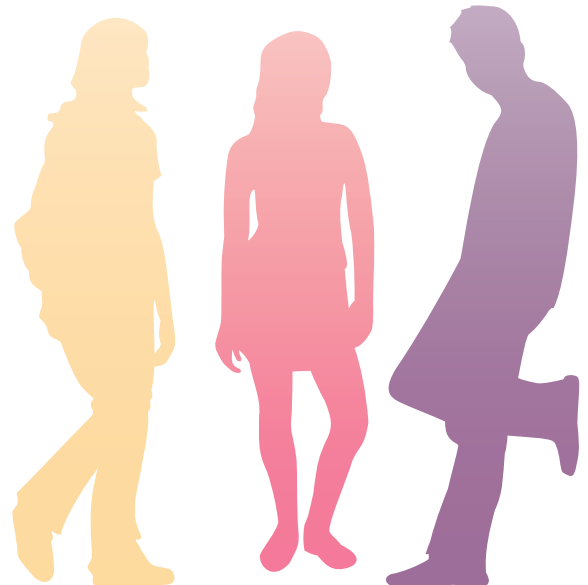
Sex can increase your risk for infections. Follow these tips to avoid getting bacteria that could cause an infection into your urethra and vagina:

- Wash your hands before and after touching your own or someone else's genitals.
- Try to pee before and right after having sex or using sex toys.
- Do not switch fingers, toys or a penis between the anus and your vagina.
- Do not share sex toys. Follow directions for proper cleaning.
- Change condoms between anal and vaginal sex.

Lube is Good!

Using lube can help make sex feel even better and lowers the risk of a condom breaking.

- Use water or silicone based lube.
- Limit use of flavoured lube and condoms (chemicals and sugars). Rinse your vulva with water after use.
- Do not use oil based lube. It is harder for the vagina to clean out the oil and it breaks latex condoms.
- Do not use spermicide, stuff that kills sperm, because it is harsh on the skin of your vagina.



Visit a clinic if:

- It hurts to pee.
- It hurts to have sex.
- Your vulva is itchy or burning.
- Your discharge/fluid smell changes
- You have a bump, rash or sores on your vulva.

Visit the clinic if you use a cream or some other medicine to help with these problems and they do not go away.

For a list of youth clinics visit: www.vch.ca/youthclinics



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