

*Better Health for Life from
Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network*



Natural Approaches to Feminine Health

The best way to stay fresh and healthy is to drink plenty of water, watch what you eat and use natural feminine products, says gynecologist Helene Leonetti, M.D., of Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network. She offers some suggestions for treating common feminine problems without harsh chemicals or perfumes, which can further irritate sensitive skin and lead to even more problems.

Douching—Generally, it's not necessary for everyday cleanliness. But douching may help clear up a yeast infection (see below) if you douche when the infection first begins. The only recommended douche is a mixture of 1/4 or 1/2 cup plain yogurt mixed with one pint of warm water. Do not douche more than twice a month.

Irritation and dryness—Try organic coconut oil. It smells good, and the lauric acid in coconut oil prevents yeast infections.

Itching—Sit in a dry tub with a compress of plain yogurt; rinse with warm water and blow dry with a hair dryer. Do not scratch or rub, which makes itching worse.

Yeast infections—Signs of a yeast infection include itching, burning, redness and a cheesy discharge. If this is your first or you're not sure it's a yeast infection, see your doctor or nurse practitioner. The problem could be something else. You should also see your health care provider if your symptoms don't improve or you have recurrent yeast infections, which could be a sign of diabetes or another condition.

Try an over-the-counter medication like Monistat, but call the doctor if the infection doesn't clear up after one course of treatment. Don't repeat the treatment on your own.

If you get frequent yeast and bacterial infections and don't have an underlying condition, try a vaginal suppository of boric acid powder (fill an empty gelatin capsule) at night for several nights.



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