

**Patient Information:**

## Daily Feminine Hygiene

Proper hygiene contributes to overall good health. Daily genital cleansing is part of feminine hygiene and is very important. Mature women have natural hormones that cause oil and sweat glands to increase discharge. Vaginal discharge may vary due to the menstrual cycle, amount of sexual activity and exercise and types of birth control used. Accumulation of this normal bodily discharge can promote rashes, irritations and odors.

Feminine hygiene may include showers or baths depending on preference. Most women are able to use the same soaps or cleansers they use on the rest of their body. Some women are sensitive to certain products and need to use neutral cleansers, such as Dove®, Basis® and Neutrogena®. It is **not** necessary to use special over the counter feminine hygiene products.

Do	DON'T
Open lips and clean between folds	Neglect the hidden areas
Change underwear daily	Wear jeans without underwear
Wear <b>underwear with a cotton crotch</b> because cotton wicks moisture away from the body	<b>Wear mini-pads</b> on a regular basis: they hold in moisture and can promote vaginal infections like yeast
<b>Wipe from front to back</b> to prevent spread of bacteria	<b>Douche:</b> douching washes away "good" bacteria and can promote vaginal infections
<b>Urinate after intercourse</b> to prevent urinary tract infections	Postpone going to the bathroom when the urge is felt or after sex
Change tampons and pads every 4-6 hours while awake	Leave tampons and pads in place for prolonged periods: moisture promotes bacterial growth
Use a blow dryer or air dry before dressing	Stay in wet clothes or bathing suits; moisture promotes bacterial and fungal growth
Wear loose comfortable clothing when possible	Wear tight jeans or spandex clothing for prolonged periods because they promote moisture
<b>Sleep without underwear</b> or in loose cotton boxer shorts to promote natural drying of the genital area	Use powder in the genital area or under breasts; powders hold in moisture and promote fungal infections