

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 |
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| Open lips and clean between folds | Neglect the hidden areas |
| Change underwear daily | Wear jeans without underwear |
| Wear underwear with a cotton crotch because cotton wicks moisture away from the body | Wear mini-pads on a regular basis: they hold in moisture and can promote vaginal infections like yeast |
| Wipe from front to back to prevent spread of bacteria | Douche: douching washes away "good" bacteria and can promote vaginal infections |
| Urinate after intercourse 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 |
| Sleep without underwear 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 |