

Abnormal vaginal discharge

What is it?

Vaginal discharge is a fluid that comes out of your vagina. It is normally clear or white. Some changes to it are normal. For instance, it is normal to have more discharge around ovulation.

Changes to normal discharge can be caused by infections, medication, or skin conditions in or around your vagina. If the amount, colour, smell or consistency of your discharge changes, this could be a sign something is wrong. Most abnormal vaginal discharge can be treated.

What will my GP do now?

Your GP will find out the cause of your abnormal discharge. You may need a [sexual health screen](#), which involves tests for sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Your GP may need a urine sample, vaginal swab or anal swab.

They will let you know how you can do these yourself. You may also need to have [cervical screening](#).

Your treatment will depend on the cause of your discharge. Treatment can include:

- Medication to kill any germs causing the discharge
- Changing how you care for the skin around your vagina and vulva (the external part of your genitals)

What will my GP do in the future?

Your GP may see you again to check on your health and symptoms. They may refer you to a sexual health clinic or a specialist called a gynaecologist if your discharge does not resolve with treatment.

What can I do?

Attend your scheduled health checkups with your GP or other healthcare workers. Do not wash inside your vagina with water or another fluid. Doing this may cause more germs to grow.

Take good care of the skin around your vulva by:

- Cleaning with warm water and a gentle skin cleanser if needed
- Using a moisturiser that has no perfume
- Not using products that can sting or inflame your skin; this includes things like baby wipes, tea tree oil, and harsh soaps or shower gels
- Not wearing nylon clothing, g-strings, tight jeans, and stockings
- Not using fabric softeners in your laundry
- Not staying in wet swimwear or sweaty gym clothes
- Always wiping or patting from front to back after you wee or poo

What supports are available?

Your GP will refer you to a gynaecologist or sexual health clinic if you need specialist care. There are clinics across the South Western Sydney Local Health District.

- Bankstown Hospital Gynaecology Clinic: Phone **9722 8368** or **9722 8380**
- Fairfield Hospital Gynaecology Clinic: Phone **9616 8506**
- Bowral and District Hospital Gynaecology Clinic: Phone **4861 0186**
- Liverpool Hospital Gynaecology Clinic: Phone **8738 4202**
- Campbelltown Hospital Gynaecology Clinic: Phone **4634 4963**
- Liverpool Sexual Health Clinic: Phone: **9827 8022**

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What questions could I ask my doctor?

- How do I know if I have an infection?*
- Will my symptoms go away on their own?*
- What treatments are available?*
- Do I need to see a specialist?*
- What tests can help find the cause?*
- Will my partner need to be tested?*



Where can I learn more?

- **Family Planning NSW** – Common vaginal and vulval conditions: fpnsw.org.au
- **Healthdirect Australia** – Vaginal irritation and infection: healthdirect.gov.au
- **Melbourne Sexual Health Centre** – Genital skin care factsheet: mshc.org.au

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

Health Resource Directory factsheets are endorsed by South Western Sydney PHN's Community Advisory Committee and local GPs

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