



*The Vaginal  
Complaints Guide*

# The Vaginal Complaints Guide

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Let's dive in, shall we? The two most common vaginal complaints are *Vaginitis* and *Vaginosis*. There is a difference between *vaginitis* and *vaginosis*. It's essential to understand the difference, or you will get sucked into paying an arm and a leg for e-books and remedies that will have no effect on your vaginal infection, except, perhaps, to make it worse. The information below focuses on providing holistic alternatives for vaginitis and vaginosis, as well as an overview of various vaginal complaints, symptoms, and causes, all of which are often healed similarly through nutrition and diet.

## Vaginitis & Vaginosis

Vaginitis and vaginosis are not the same conditions at all. Vaginitis is a fungal infection, commonly known as a *Yeast Infection*. Yeast infection can attack any part of the body, including the vagina (and on men, the penis). Vaginosis is a bacterial infection coined as BV. What works to cure one will not work for the other. Sometimes, vaginitis is incorrectly classified under the "vaginitis" umbrella. However, False information prevents timely cures because of the using the wrong terminology. Some people are touting symptom relief and natural remedies for bacterial vaginosis are, in reality, offering products that treat yeast infections, not bacterial infections. Products for yeast infection will not cure a bacterial infection.

## Vaginal pH & Vaginal Over-the-Counter Products FYI

**Vaginal pH Test Kits:** Vaginal infection screening kits score your vaginal pH and may be less than co-pays at your doctor's office. They are available at your local drugstore for about \$15. They will do nothing to cure you, but they can tell you if you have a vaginal pH issue. However, here's the thing. A vaginal pH above 4.5 often tests positive for a bacterial pathogen in premenopausal women. Meaning, pH isn't all that predictive when it comes to post-menopausal women. If you are post-menopausal, your pH could look balanced, and you may still have a yeast or bacterial infection.

**Vaginal Over-the-Counter Products:** While there are plenty of yeast infection products available over-the-counter, very few bacterial infection products are available. Most touted cures for Bacterial Vaginosis (BV) are supplements rather than ointments or creams and cost an arm and a leg.

Always read the fine print. Most products touting the cure of your bacterial infection are really talking about yeast infections, which is *vaginitis*. Products for yeast infection *will not* cure a bacterial infection (vaginosis).

### Symptoms of Vaginitis & Vaginosis

*Vaginitis* (yeast infection) typically produces a lumpy, white discharge and swelling of the vulva. On the other hand, BV has a yogurt-like or pasty discharge that is yellow or gray and smells a bit fishy, especially during and after intercourse.

Both vaginal complaints are caused by a decrease in *Lactobacilli* (good bacteria) in the vagina. Decreased healthy bacteria in the vagina is often associated with imbalanced gut flora.

Both vaginitis and vaginosis can cause itching, burning, and pain during intercourse. Other related vaginal complaints may include vaginal stinging, rawness, unusual discharge or odor, lumps, or bumps on the labia that itch and disappear like hives. Some women experience lower back pain and swollen lymph nodes on the insides of their thighs.

Sore, raw, red patches of skin on the labia or just inside the vaginal opening may also be related to vaginal atrophy associated with *Vulvodynia*. Any blisters that itch, burn, sting, or ache may also be related to genital herpes.

Vaginitis and vaginosis can be transmitted sexually, although not necessarily. Men can be carriers of both without having any symptoms. However, it's important to note that vaginitis and vaginosis can develop on their own as a reaction to stress, diet, sexual partner, and environmental toxins.

### Possible Causes of Vaginosis & Vaginitis

While an overgrowth of fungus commonly causes vaginitis, the most common cause of vaginosis is an overgrowth of the bacteria *Gardnerella*, which is a bacteria naturally found in the vagina. Its excess is caused by declining lactobacilli bacteria in the vagina, allowing other natural organisms to multiply rapidly. These different types of bacteria may include *Escherichia coli*, *Mycoplasma*, *Streptococci*, and *Staphylococci* bacteria.

The following is a list of items or activities that can bring on or aggravate yeast infections and BV.

- Sensitivity to deodorants, soaps, fragranced douches, feminine products, laundry detergent sensitivities, dyed toilet paper, perfumes, body washes, and excessive washing, or being sexually intimate with a partner engaging in these things can cause infection. Avoid chemicals and household cleaning products that are not earth-friendly.
- Sex without proper lubrication, which irritates the vaginal lining.
- Vaseline or fragranced baby oil products used vaginally.
- Switching sexual partners
- Reactions to natural chemicals in plant foods, especially oxalates.
- Tight clothing or too much sitting, which does not allow the vagina to "breathe".
- STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections)
- Fluctuating hormone levels, due to stress, menstruation, pregnancy, or menopause
- Consider the medications you use. The use of antibiotics and over-the-counter medications may also cause candida or make things worse. Ask your doctor about some substitute choices if a particular product seems to give you problems.
- Sugar Disease (Diabetes)
- Vitamin Deficiency

- Stress, negative emotions, anxiety, and nervous tension (all upset hormonal balance)
- Poor sleeping habits
- Food allergies or sensitivities, dehydration, an unbalanced diet.
- Fibromyalgia Syndrome or *Sjogren's Disease* may also cause vaginal dryness, burning, redness, tenderness, and patchy areas.
- Viruses. It is now thought, in some circles, that viruses can cause bacterial infections, including the Herpes Simplex Virus.
- Bacterial infection migrating to the vaginal area or parasites (worms)
- An over-abundance of *Iron* in the body can aggravate a vaginal infection. Infectious bacteria thrive off of iron. When you have a bacterial infection, your body will try to hide excess iron in your liver, spleen, and bone marrow. So, if you have a bacterial infection, lay low on iron until you rid yourself of your infection.
- Surgeries and other traumas to the lower back may also cause this condition by weakening body structures so that the tissue cells of your vagina do not receive enough oxygen.
- When you sit more than 75% of the day, especially on hard surfaces, it can cause muscle tension and abnormalities. It also prevents your vagina from gaining air, which maintains a dark, moist, and warm environment, a condition in which bacteria thrive. Again, lack of oxygen. Your vagina has to "breathe".
- Myofascial Pain Syndrome, muscle tension, or muscle abnormalities in the pelvic floor can lead to a lack of blood flow and oxygen to your vaginal tissues, leading to symptoms.

**Spiritual/Psychological causes of Vaginal Dis-Ease:** Fear of intimacy, not necessarily just physical intimacy, but emotional intimacy.

**Associated Chakras:** The 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> Chakras/The Orange, Green, and Indigo Aura Color Personalities

**Associated Temperaments:** All, except *Melancholic*

**Associated Energy Meridians:** Spleen, Pericardium (Heart Sack), and Triple Burner meridians

### Vaginal Complaints

- **Gardnerella Vaginalis**, as previously mentioned, if you have vaginosis, it's usually due to the over-growth of the bacteria, Gardnerella vaginalis. Gardnerella is a healthy vaginal bacteria that tends to overgrow when there is insufficient Lactobacilli in the vagina. Gardnerella is not a harmful bacteria, but other bacteria overgrow along with it, protect it, and, together, create symptoms, such as vaginitis or vaginosis. In essence, vaginosis is a polymicrobial infection, meaning more than one bacteria is involved.
- **Cytolytic vaginosis** is an uncommon vaginal complaint. It occurs when there is too much lactobacilli in the vagina. When lactobacillus overgrows, it creates redness, itching, burning upon urination, and pain upon entry during intercourse. Its symptoms are much like the symptoms of *Vulvodynia*.
- **Trichomoniasis** is an infection that can occur from bacteria getting into the vagina from the rectum due to the vaginal opening and the rectum being in such close proximity. It can be sexually transmittable. There is usually a very itchy, foul, fishy-smelling discharge.
- **Atrophic vaginitis** is an irritation and inflammation of the vaginal lining caused by a decrease in the hormone estrogen, which may be evident during post-menopause and after childbirth (postpartum). The vaginal lining, including the opening, becomes thinner and drier, making the vagina susceptible to infection and disease. This vaginal complaint can cause so much pain during intercourse that many women become sexually disabled. There is not usually a discharge unless there is a secondary infection.

- **Vulvodynia** (sometimes called *Vestibular Adenitis*) often gets confused with other conditions where the main symptoms include irritation and pain, such as with *Atrophic Vaginitis* or *Cytolytic Vaginosis*. Mainstream medical practitioners do not entirely understand the root of the matter, but it has been proven not to be hormone-related. Vulvodynia causes redness, irritation, itching, pain, and moderate to severe pain with intercourse, but symptoms do not necessarily include discharge. A possible cause of vulvodynia is sensitivity to something you are eating or drinking, such as a diet too rich in oxalates, which causes urine to irritate the skin it touches. High levels of *Uric Acid* can also cause Vulvodynia. Gluten sensitivity can cause all of the symptoms of *vulvodynia*, *atrophic vaginitis*, and *dyspareunia*. It may also create an environment for vaginitis and vaginosis infections to flourish. Vulvodynia may be related to *Myofascial Pain Syndrome* (muscle tension) in the lower back or pelvic floor. If you have irritation and pain, along with a discharge, you may be dealing with more than one condition or have *Vulvovaginitis*, which means inflammation or infection of the vulva and outer vagina.
- **Dyspareunia** is the term for painful intercourse. There are many different reasons for painful intercourse, including psychological reasons and any of the conditions mentioned above, which is extremely frustrating. This condition may also be related to *Myofascial Pain Syndrome*.
- **Vaginal Complaints Related to Sexual Activity:** If you are sexually active and, after having been with your male partner, you experience a yeast or bacterial infection, you might be sensitive to his sperm, which is more alkaline than the normal acidic pH of your vagina. Sometimes, sperm can throw off vaginal pH. Men often carry bacterial microbes in their urethras without ever having symptoms. Look for redness, irritation, or a scaly appearance on the head of the penis. Also, there may be a fishy or yeasty smell. Men can and should be treated for bacterial infection as well. So that you know, an over-growth of healthy bacteria can occur even in men and women who are not sexually active. Virgins can also suffer from genital infections.

## Vaginitis

**Vaginitis**, as already stated, is better known as *Yeast Infection*. It is also known as *Candida*. *Candida* is a natural organism found in the body. Its overgrowth can cause vaginosis when the vaginal environment has been upset. When there's a lack of vaginal lactobacilli in the vagina, a yeast infection can evolve on its own without sexual relations. However, it can be transferred sexually, especially when a male partner's penis foreskin is still intact. *Candida* infections are typically found in the mouth (*Thrush*), under the breast, in the gut, in the groin area, and vaginally (*Vaginitis*), where it thrives on warmth and moistness. It can become systemic, meaning it can spread throughout your entire body through the blood. Men can also have yeast and bacterial infections on the extremities of the penis.

*Candida* can cause and mimic nearly all stress syndromes. The list of symptoms for *candida* is almost endless.

- dizziness
- tiredness
- aches and pains
- low-grade fever
- burning mouth
- bad breath
- itchy skin
- night sweats or chills
- tingling or numbness of the skin
- kidney and bladder infections
- PMS
- diabetes
- arthritis
- chills
- cravings
- brain fog
- irritability, mood swings, anxiety, and depression
- muscle twitching
- sleep disorder
- forgetfulness
- suicidal tendencies
- digestive upsets
- blurred vision
- binging
- asthma
- indecisiveness
- panic attack
- heart palpitations
- phobias
- impotence

### **Possible Causes of Vaginitis (Candida Over-Growth)**

- Stress
- Chemicals, toxins, dyes, and fragrances.
- Prescription and non-prescription drugs
- Allergies and sensitivities to foods and food additives
- A diet too high in acid-forming foods, especially sugar and white flour products



## Spiritual/Psychological Causes of Candida

There are ways you are not supporting yourself as well as you could be, which is causing anger and frustration. You may not trust your relationships with others, which makes for being rather demanding or withholding from others.

## BV (Bacterial Vaginosis)

Lab test results often list *Gardnerella vaginalis* overgrowth as a cause of vaginosis. As already mentioned, *Gardnerella* is a helpful bacteria naturally found in the vagina, which overgrows when there's insufficient *Lactobacilli* in the vaginal microbiome. *Lactobacilli* helps create vaginal *Lactic Acid* and *H2O2* (natural hydrogen peroxide produced in the body), driving up pH levels to protect the vagina from the overgrowth of natural bacteria. A decrease in *Lactobacilli* can cause both vaginitis and vaginosis, which can hide under biofilm and be difficult to treat.

Whether bacteria or fungus overgrows is often influenced by migrating microbes or particles. It's not the fault of the *Gardnerella* bacteria that infection takes place. *Gardnerella*, alone, causes no infection. Vaginitis and vaginosis polymicrobial infections, meaning more than one microbe is involved. For example, bacteria can migrate from the rectum to the opening of the vagina or be transmitted sexually. Hygiene products containing fragrance may also upset the vaginal environment leading to infection. Diet, lifestyle, toxins, stress, and exercise (or lack of it) also affect the vaginal environment. So, it's these other overgrowths or additions, along with *Gardnerella* that, together, over-populate the vagina and create vaginitis, vaginosis, and possible secondary infections.

When vaginal *Lactobacilli* decreases, vaginal pH also lowers, allowing infections to thrive. The longer an infection exists, the more populated it becomes. Vaginitis is relatively easy to treat. However, in the case of vaginosis, the microbes eventually merge into a resistant biofilm community of bacterial organisms encapsulated, protected from, and resistant to antibiotics, *H2O2* (natural hydrogen peroxide), and lactic acid. At this point, the vagina has no defense.

## The Problem with Treating Biofilm Communities

What is a biofilm, you ask? Imagine a group of bacteria huddled together under a turtle shell-like covering, a protective bubble. *Herpes Simplex Virus* does this very thing. Now imagine this tiny bubble attached to your vaginal wall. Imagine thousands and millions of them. Now envision these bubbles having an outer protective armor against antibiotics of any kind. During antibiotic treatment, the biofilm, which is the armor, is in place, and the bacteria go into a dormant state. It gets even better. When in treatment, the biofilm is retracted (for lack of a better word), and the bacteria go back to doing what they

do, which is to multiply and create symptoms. By the way, the Herpes Simplex Virus also hides under biofilm, which is how it hides from your immune system.

### **The Only Time an Antibiotic Will Work to Cure BV**

Treating vaginosis (sometimes referred to as *Nonspecific Vaginosis*) is a lot like finding the right key to unlock a door. For an antibiotic to work, the infection must be the first occurrence of vaginosis (BV), short-lived, and treated early enough with a substantial population of lactobacilli left in the vagina before the biofilm community is established. This means treatment will only work if you immediately rush to the doctor at the first sign of symptoms (that you have never had before), while your vaginal pH is still balanced, antibiotics may work. Any later, there's hardly a chance an antibiotic will serve any purpose at all. Antibiotics can't get through the biofilm once it exists.

Once an antibiotic is unsuccessful, it will never work because the biofilm becomes even more resistant, which is why women end up with recurring infections. It's not that an antibiotic cures you. The biofilm goes dormant during treatment and then resurfaces after treatment offering a temporary relief from symptoms.

Here's something to think about. Antibiotics kill all lactobacilli left in the vagina during treatment. If prevention and successful treatment depend on a significant amount of lactobacilli in the vagina, what is the chance that antibiotics will be of any help at all in ending a cycle of BV? In fact, following antibiotic treatment, the first lactobacilli to bounce back in the vagina is *Lactobacillus iners* or *L. iners*. This particular type of lactobacilli is never very strong. It seems near hopeless, doesn't it?

### **When Preparing for Surgery or Whenever You Need to Take Antibiotics**

Start taking acidophilus supplements 2-4 weeks before surgery and during (and for at least three weeks after) taking antibiotics.

### **The Dangers of Bacterial Vaginosis**

The danger of BV is that infection may spread to organs in neighboring areas causing *Pelvic Inflammatory Disease* and increasing fertility problems or the chance of miscarriage. It should encourage

you to know that it's generally agreed among physicians that vaginosis can't cross the barrier of the vaginal wall and become systemic. Meaning it cannot enter the bloodstream through the vaginal wall.

## The War Against BV

The war against BV is really against the biofilm. There has to be a way to get to the microbes beneath the armor of biofilm. Right?.

There are enzymes known to render Gardnerella's biofilm sensitive to H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> and lactic acid, so the microbes gathered under the biofilm can be destroyed, but the problem is they are not yet disclosed or made available to the public by the medical community. So far, it is claimed only these unavailable, experimental prescription drugs can do this.

Just as in the treatment of vaginitis, there are particular probiotics, meaning pro-life, that can kill and remove the organisms responsible for vaginosis. They are *Lactobacillus reuteri* - RC-14 which destroys it, and *Lactobacillus rhamnosus* - GR-1, which removes it. *L. plantarum* is another important probiotic. Another lactobacillus that might help is *L. crispatus*, CTV-05. Acidophilus, although not able to put a dent in the biofilm, can populate quickly. When *L. reuteri*, *L. rhamnosus*, and *L. acidophilus* are taken orally or are applied to the vagina, they help increase vaginal lactobacilli.

Furthermore, the acid balance (pH) of the vagina must be maintained for harmful bacteria not to multiply and take over once more. Lactobacilli in the vagina are responsible for creating this acid balance. One way to increase acid levels of the vagina is to douche with *Grapefruit Seed Extract*, a multipurpose germ killer or antibiotic for yeast, viruses, and bacteria. It is non-toxic and has no side effects. I feel I should mention that 3-5% of all people may be sensitive to acids.

During my research, I discovered that if you are deficient in certain enzymes, particularly protease, which helps to digest the protein you eat, you will suffer more from bacterial, viral, and fungal infections. Therefore enzymes are recommended as the first part of the "cure" for BV. There are several enzyme products on the market. Some are digestive enzyme products, and some are whole-body enzymes. *Wobenzyme-N* is a whole-body enzyme supplement that boosts the immune system and reduces inflammation. It helps the body to better fight off bacteria, fungus, and virus infections. It has been the most studied and is very effective.

## The Role of Hormones

As hormones rise, fall, and swim away, the vaginal environment changes. Many women have problems with BV or yeast infection around their menses because of hormonal changes in the body. Fluctuating hormones during PMS and menopausal stages affect the natural bacteria in the vagina. Once the vaginal flora's balance is upset, certain bacteria can overgrow, causing vaginal complaints.

Estrogen dominance can play a factor during the menopausal stages. You may not have as much estrogen as you used to, but if your progesterone levels are lower than your estrogen levels, you are considered estrogen dominant. Estrogen dominance is what causes hot flashes, vaginal dryness, mood swings, and other menopausal symptoms. Hormonal changes can cause vaginal atrophy, thinning of the vaginal lining, and muscle tone reduction, which can be a reason for not being able to get vaginal and bladder infections under control. Hormonal imbalance is almost always a factor in recurring BV in menopausal women. Using natural estrogen or progesterone creams or oils may help heal and plump up vaginal tissues when applied to the vaginal labia. Hormonal creams can be used in conjunction with lactobacilli therapies (prebiotics and probiotics). The hormonal cream will not cure BV but can restore hormonal balance to the vagina, which may serve to relieve the infection in time.

It's a good idea to take or apply both estrogen and progesterone when using hormonal therapy. Estrogen levels in the body that far exceed progesterone only serve to cause more adverse symptoms. Of course, you should start by having your hormone levels tested before beginning any new therapy. Increasing phytoestrogens in your diet can help minimize menopausal symptoms and balance the vaginal flora. *Fennel, Anise, Ginseng, Alfalfa, Dong Quai, and Red Clover* are touted to offer good results.

### **How Diet Plays a Role in Recovering From Vaginal Complaints**

By now, you're aware vaginitis and vaginosis are both caused by a lack of lactobacilli and other friendly bacteria in the vagina. Therefore, treating them through the diet is the same. An unhealthy diet wreaks havoc on the body, not to mention the mind and spirit as well.

- Avoid eating refined carbohydrates, sugary foods, eating really sweet fruits, eating much fruit, too much sugar (if at all), and eating anything that contains fake sweeteners.
- Avoid citrus and other acidic foods until all inflammation and infection are gone.
- Avoid prepared and prepackaged foods. Eliminate the use of refined, bleached, or chemically treated flour.
- Flour is often a problem as it contains gluten, a family of proteins that cause unwanted vaginal symptoms. Avoid gluten, which is in oats, wheat, barley, millet, and rye. As long as you have no sensitivity to gluten, bread made from sprouted grain is better for you than bread made from white flour. You might try *Ezekial* bread.
- Eat no meats containing synthetic hormones or chemicals. Reduce eating red meat to no more than twice per week or buy organic meat from a local butcher instead.

- Avoid unhealthy fats and exchange them with healthy fats containing *Omega-3s* (essential fatty acids), such as *Olive* oil and *Walnuts*.
- Avoid dairy unless it is organic unflavored yogurt and milk. Keeping dairy consumption to a minimum is preferable. When choosing dairy, be sure to use quality products, such as organic, plain yogurt, and Kefir. Better yet, choose rice or almond milk for cereal and cooking. Supplementing only with lactobacillus supplements
- Avoid nut butter, pickles, mushrooms, soy sauce, vinegar, and anything that contains MSG.
- Coffee and tea, in excess, add to body acidity, which creates a further imbalance in the body's microbiome.

### **Foods to Include In Your Diet**

- Following a diet that is more alkaline than acidic will help your body to function optimally. Eat more live, fresh, whole, plant-based foods. These foods contain the enzymes, nutrients, and fiber that our bodies cannot produce and are necessary for proper cell functioning
- Ensure you are getting enough essential fatty acids in your diet by eating such foods as fish, walnuts, and ground flaxseed or take a fish or krill oil supplement. It may do you well to take Evening Primrose oil.
- Drink plenty of pure water.

Allergies to foods and additives may also cause vaginal symptoms of vaginitis. You might consider getting tested for allergies, which involves a series of tiny needle pricks containing allergens. Your arm is then checked for any skin reactions to the allergens. Rarely does anyone have more of a reaction than a bit of redness but be sure to ask your doctor if you have concerns over known allergies that give you considerable problems.

## Vitamins & Supplements for Vaginal Health

- **Vitamin A** (no more than 8,000 – 10,000 IU of Vitamin A per day, especially if pregnant or nursing) or *Beta Carotene*. Vitamin A nourishes epithelial tissues, which make up the lining of the vagina. Vitamin A deficiencies can be caused by malabsorption or by not eating dark leafy greens, deep or bright fruits, carrots, yellow vegetables, egg yolk, liver, or fish liver oil. Vitamin A deficiency also causes dry eyes, dry skin, and night blindness.
- **Probiotics** are excellent for digestive health and improving the flora of the complete digestion track, including the gut and colon. Often, harmful bacteria cross the vaginal barrier from the large intestine and colon or from the rectum to the vagina. Keep your digestive system healthy, and there will be less chance of this occurring. Research dictates two specific probiotics that help maintain vaginal health, *L. rhamnosus* (lactobacillus) and *L. rueten* (most often referred to as *L. reuteri*). You need at least 2.5 billion live bacteria for them to be effective at preventing bacterial and yeast infections in the gut. Make sure the supplement you take contains 'live' bacteria. If you have recurring bacterial vaginitis, it is not enough to eat yogurt or swallow down acidophilus products for vaginal issues. It is also beneficial to eat or drink one probiotic drink or food each day, such as plain organic yogurt or, even better, kefir. Lactobacillus vaginal inserts may help directly restore the natural lactobacillus bacteria in the vagina, helping to restore vaginal flora and pH. Also, see *Prebiotics & Probiotics* further down this page.
- **B Complex & Folic Acid** helps to create new healthy cells and cleans the blood. A high percentage of women with vaginal problems are deficient in *Folic Acid* (also called *folate* or *folacin*) and B vitamins in general. Some Highly Sensitive Women say that once they restored levels of folic acid, their vaginal problems went away. Folic acid lowers homocysteine levels, preventing bone loss (particularly the lower spine and haunches) and *Parkinson's* disease. BV can be caused by stress and being over-taxed emotionally, which depletes the body of folate. Folic acid also works with serotonin and norepinephrine in the brain to relieve hot flashes and flushes in post-menopausal women. Take no more than 1000 mcg per day (divided into smaller doses throughout the day) for seven days. Then reduce the amount to between 400-800 mcg per day. You can try not taking it once symptoms subside, but you will want to continue use if symptoms return. Folic acid is naturally found in leafy vegetables, citrus fruit, whole grains, and legumes, but these foods may not deliver the dose you need. It is also found in foods labeled "enriched". However, these are often not necessarily nutritious, such as fortified breakfast cereals, white rice, bread, flour, pasta, and cornmeal. At least a 50 mg B-complex supplement is suggested along with Folic Acid. **NOTE:** It is imperative to take **folic acid** in combination with vitamin B-12 (or better yet, a B-complex). The folic acid may hide a B-12 deficiency and worsen the effects of an underlying B-12 deficiency. Older adults taking high folic acid dosages without B-12 can suffer cognitive disorders from underlying B-12 deficiency. Folic acid can correct anemia associated with a B-12 deficiency but not nerve damage. Permanent nerve damage can occur if the B-12 deficiency is not treated, along with folic acid deficiency. The chance of folic acid becoming toxic in the body is very slim. It is water-soluble and leaves the system quickly through the urine. However, too much folic acid may be harmful in some cases. Supplementing with additional folic acid in the final trimester of pregnancy is not recommended. You should be getting enough folic acid in your prenatal vitamins. If for any reason, you are not on prenatal vitamins, a total of 800 mcg per day is the suggested dose for pregnant women and those under 18 years of age. Talk to your doctor if you are taking seizure, anti-malarial, or ischemic

heart medication. Allergic responses, such as breathing problems, hives, rash, or chest pain, may occur if you well exceed the 1000 mcg dose.

- **Vitamin C** helps to increase the vagina's natural production of hydrogen peroxide, which cleans out bacteria. While using this approach to heal BV, it is wise to take 1000 mg. of vitamin C during the douching period and 500 mg. of vitamin C for another seven days after you stop douching. Supplementing with 500 mg of vitamin C is a healthy daily regimen. Your doctor may not know about this, but there are prescription Vaginal Vitamin C Tablets that correct pH imbalances in the vagina and relieve all symptoms of bacterial vaginosis with no side effects. If you would like to give your doctor information about these tablets, visit [www.polichem.com](http://www.polichem.com). Often, these inserts are not covered by insurance and may be expensive, but they are available. Do not pop a standard vitamin C tablet into your vagina. Even if it is buffered, C, it will burn. The prescription *Vaginal Vitamin C Tablets* are coated and time-released.
- **Vitamin D3.** Without enough sunlight, our bodies are deficient in vitamin D. This can cause hormone imbalance and mood disorder, particularly Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).
- Take powerful **antioxidants**, such as vitamin E, Co Q-10, or Grape Seed Extract. They help to increase oxygen levels in cells. Fungus and bacteria love cells that are deficient in oxygen and will cling to them. Antioxidant supplement combinations can be found at your health food or vitamin store.
- Taking fish oil (or Krill Oil) is a priority, as **omega-3 oils** are essential to help calm and repair cells throughout the body. Krill oil is full of antioxidants. If you don't care to take supplements, eat more fish. Don't take fish oil or krill oil supplements if you are allergic to kinds of seafood.
- Add **fiber** to your diet by using *Psyllium Seed, Flaxseed, or eating Fiber One* cereal (it tastes good). Toxins in the gut attach to fiber and are carried out of the body when you have a bowel movement. Fiber is excellent for cleansing the colon. Be sure to drink 6-10 glasses of water each day. Fiber, without sufficient water, is a cause of constipation.
- **Flaxseed** helps to fight off bacterial and viral infections. Flaxseed must be ground up and stored in the refrigerator to be of benefit. Add a little to cereals, smoothies, and salads. Powered (finely ground) Flaxseed can be used as a tea to alleviate digestive gas (sip 8 ounces of hot water containing 1/2 tsp and a bit of honey or a mint leaf). You may also purchase Flaxseed oil and add it to smoothies and protein drinks. Take 1-2 tablespoons daily. Flaxseed is exceptionally high in the amino acid, Arginine, which can trigger herpes breakouts.

- **Zinc** 15-30 mg per day helps with healing. You can safely go up to 50 mg daily to help prevent colds and flus.
- **Vitamin E** – 200 IU – 400 IU per day, no more.
- **Goldenseal** is often recommended for its ability to fight infection of all types. It is used as a supplement and in douches. It can be found in capsule form. However, do not take goldenseal for more than seven days or if you are allergic to ragweed. Also, do not take it if you are pregnant.
- **Garlic** works better against yeast but fights all infections. Place a single, small, peeled (but not nicked) clove in a strip of sterile gauze, lubricated with olive oil into the vagina, leaving a trail of gauze externally. Replace every 12 hours. 3-7 days should be sufficient to notice positive results. Otherwise, discontinue. Ask your doctor before using garlic supplements or increasing garlic in your diet if you are on blood pressure or cholesterol medicines.
- **Oil of Oregano** contains *Carvacrol*, which destroys candida. Look for this supplement at health food and vitamin stores. Take or apply as directed.
- **Pau D' Arco** is an herb that contains antibiotic agents. It can be found in capsule and tea forms.
- **Echinacea** can be used to fight off a bacterial infection and boost the immune system. However, it works best when combined with other antibacterial and antiviral herbs and spices. Use as directed on the label, usually for no more than two weeks.

### Prebiotics & Probiotics

Again, if you have been under ongoing stress, have trouble digesting your foods, or are taking medications, it is essential to replace the friendly bacteria in your gut by taking **prebiotics** and **probiotics**. Don't just eat extra yogurt. Conventional dairy products contain excess sugar, which yeast thrives on and is known to cause stomach upsets in some individuals. Typical yogurt rarely contains enough acidophilus to make a huge impact anyway. When you do eat yogurt, make sure it should only be plain and organic. You can add natural sweeteners, such as *Stevia*, a bit of honey, or a little fruit. So that you know, *Stevia* can cause diarrhea in those sensitive to it.



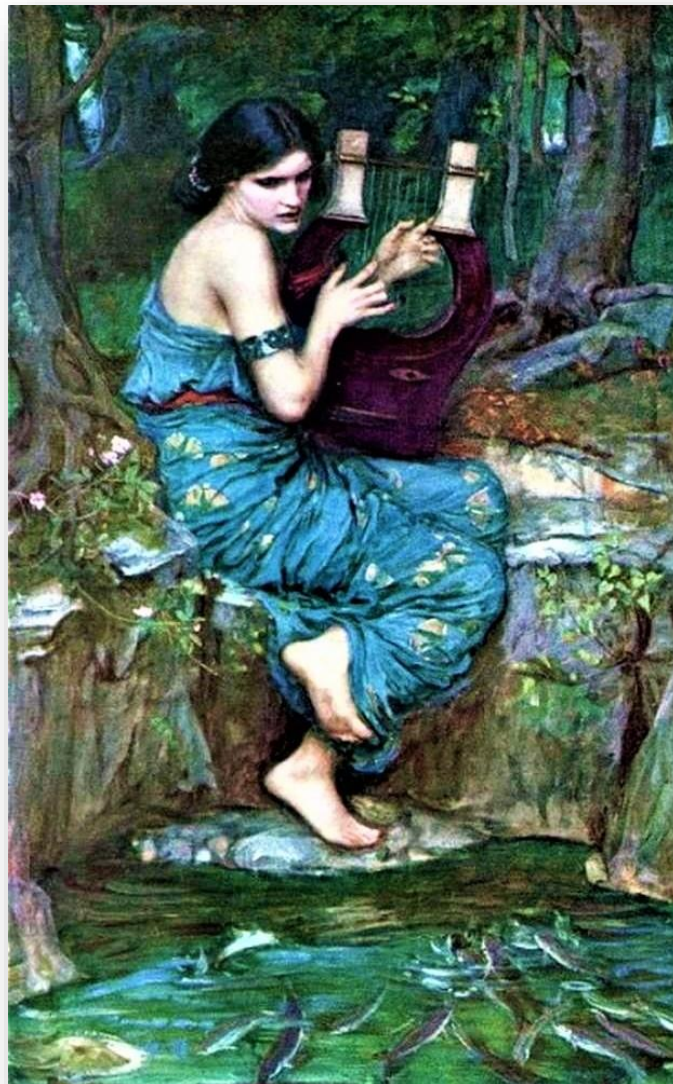
Probiotics are recommended for both vaginitis and vaginosis because probiotics, such as *L. acidophilus* and *Bifidobacteria bifidum*, help suppress the growth of specific fungus and improve digestion by increasing some enzymes and producing acids that fight bacteria. They also manufacture vitamins *K*, *B1*, *B2*, *B3*, *B12*, and *Folic Acid*. Levels of these vitamins are often decreased in women suffering from BV.

There are several strains of probiotics. Most probiotic products carry one or two strains of necessary bacteria, such as *L. Acidophilus* (protects the heart and improves digestion) and *L. Rhamnosus* (sometimes known as *Lactobacillus GG*, which prevents and helps to relieve *Irritable Bowel Syndrome*, vaginitis, vaginosis, and childhood eczema). To these, I would add *L-Reuten* or *L- Reuteri*, which helps to maintain a healthy vaginal environment.

Other strains are:

1. casei - Boosts immunity.
2. lactis - Keeps your colon healthy.
3. boulandii - Eases 'gut' stress and diarrhea.
4. bifidum - Strengthens the gut's immune system.

**NOTE:** There are specific strains of probiotics that increase *Histamine Intolerance*. I discuss these in on my website.



## Vaginal Soothing Recipes

### Baking Soda

- **Baking Soda Bath** (for inflammation, pain, and itch): Add 2-4 tablespoons of baking soda to 2 inches of bathwater. Sit in it for 15 minutes to reduce itchiness and pain. Do this 2-3 times the first week and once or twice each week, after that, to prevent recurrences.

- **Baking Soda Douche** (for inflammation, pain, and itch): Mix 1-2 teaspoons of baking soda in 1 pint (four cups) of warm water. Gently douche once or twice each week as needed.

### Apple Cider Vinegar

**Apple Cider Soak:** Add one teaspoon of apple cider vinegar to 1 gallon of warm to hot water (for a small basin) and sit for 20 minutes or add 3 cups of apple cider vinegar to bath water and soak for 20 minutes. When taking sitz baths, be sure to swirl the water into the vaginal opening.

**Alternating Apple Cider Douche:** This douche is typical for yeast infection. I mention it here to restore some acidity to the vagina, which increases pH, which fungus dislikes. If you have been using antibiotics for BV, you have more of a chance of developing a secondary yeast infection. In the morning add two teaspoons of apple cider vinegar to 2 cups of room temperature to warm water and douche. In the evening add one teaspoon of plain yogurt (organic, plain only) or the contents of 2 lactobacilli capsules with 1 cup of warm water and douche. Do this for 14 days and nights, no longer.

### Plain Yogurt

The old-world vaginal yeast *cure* was to apply or douche with buttermilk mixed with a bit of water. However, studies now show this to be ineffective at curing BV or yeast infection. Still, it can be very soothing. Inserting plain yogurt (no fruit, added sugars, or dyes) into the vagina before bedtime may ease irritation. Plain yogurt contains lactobacilli (usually *L. acidophilus*), as does the inner vagina. Overgrowth of healthy bacteria upsets the ecological balance of the vagina, resulting in yeast infection. Applying plain yogurt may help to restore balance and ease irritation. However, once again, this is not a cure. Studies show tampons soaked in yogurt and then applied do not deliver the lactobacillus to the vagina properly. You can also insert a soaked piece of sterile gauze or just plain yogurt at night for temporary relief from symptoms for 7-14 days.

### Tea Tree Essential Oil

Tea Tree oil is considered by many to be antibacterial and antifungal with antiseptic and skin healing qualities. However, there seems to be a great deal of controversy over whether Tea Tree oil can rid all types of vaginal infections. Tea Tree oil is used best as an antiseptic and a preventative for vaginitis and vaginosis but is a cure only for yeast infection and not BV. I mention its uses as it does often work well as

a soother. While Tea Tree oil will not resolve a bacterial infection, it may solve a yeast infection. It does relieve associated pain and discomfort of yeast and other fungal infections, skin irritations, genital warts, and herpes lesions. Tea Tree oil may burn slightly but should only do so for just a few moments. You should barely be able to smell the oil in your preparations. Some people are sensitive to Tea Tree oil and must dilute it significantly, reducing its effectiveness.

**Tea Tree Oil Douche:** Mix five drops of 100% Tea Tree essential oil into one quart of warm water. Swirl a bit to make sure it is blended. You may also add 2-4 drops of garlic juice. Garlic fights infection. Never douche for more than 7-14 days unless you have your doctor's permission. The idea here is to raise the pH of the vagina with the use of acid elements. If your symptoms refuse to go away, get worse, or come back, see your doctor.

**Tea Tree Oil Suppositories:** Tea Tree oil suppositories usually come in a package of 6 capsules containing 200 mg each. Tea Tree oil in a vegetable base to be inserted at bedtime. Use as directed for a yeast infection and are available at your health store or online.

**Tea Tree Oil Sitz Bath:** Add ten drops of 100% Tea Tree oil to half a tub of warm water and sit in it for at least 20 minutes.

**Tea Tree Anti-Itch & Burn Ointment:** Add six drops of Tea Tree oil to 1 tablespoon of *Aloe Vera gel* and mix. Apply it right to the vagina to relieve itching. Another alternative is to swab the inside of your vagina with your finger with the solution. Aloe Vera gel is often used for burns and is incredibly relieving when it comes to irritated vaginal tissue.

### Hydrogen Peroxide for Bacterial Vaginosis ONLY

*Hydrogen Peroxide Therapy* has treated vaginal complaints in Italy (for the past 100 years), the United Kingdom, and Canada. I don't suggest it as a *cure*, as it may or may not get rid of your infection depending on the severity of your condition and how long you have had it. However, hydrogen peroxide does relieve all symptoms *immediately*. The vagina creates hydrogen peroxide on its own. In the absence of its natural hydrogen peroxide, healthy vaginal bacteria can become imbalanced and over-grow, usually due to low levels of Lactobacilli in the vagina.

Peroxide is also an antiseptic and an anti-infective. It is, basically, water with an extra oxygen molecule. Vaginally applied, hydrogen peroxide helps to balance vaginal pH. It is this extra molecule that produces bubbling when it comes into contact with harmful bacteria.

Hydrogen peroxide may cause infected tissue to burn upon application as it forces harmful bacteria's release from skin tissue. The burn causes no damage to healthy cells but removes infected cells with no side effects whatsoever. It does not cause this bubbly reaction in healthy skin tissue.

Medical tests worldwide prove 3% hydrogen peroxide works just as well, if not better than the prescription drugs *Metronidazole* or *Clindamycin*. Still, it is not considered a cure. Here is why.

Some circles consider this a cure if the symptoms no longer exist within seven days of starting treatment. Others say 21-30 days is a better judge of a cure. However, most cases of bacterial vaginosis return 2-3 months down the road when not truly *cured*. Any absence of symptoms before that is considered just that,

an absence of symptoms. There are no studies that have determined if a bacterial vaginosis infection might be the same infection, a re-infection, or a new infection.

The difficulty in offering hydrogen peroxide therapy stems from many variations on proper dosage and length of usage. If you research this cure for yourself, you will shortly discover most instructions available are not complete. For example, the dosage of how much peroxide to use might be there, but an author doesn't say whether to dilute with water or how often one uses the treatment. Or, an article might mention how often one uses it but omit whether the peroxide should be mixed with water. You'll find some practitioners saying to dilute the peroxide with water, but they neglect to say how much peroxide to use. In contrast, others give an exact combination of water and peroxide but still fail to mention how often to use it each day or for how long.

Of the exacts I found during research, one doctor said to douche with three tablespoons of 3% hydrogen peroxide mixed in one quart of water for seven evenings in a row. Another said to douche with 1/2 peroxide (3% hydrogen peroxide) and 1/2 water for 3-5 days, and another advised douching with *only* 3% hydrogen peroxide just *one* time. One report by a midwife suggested first diluting it and then decreasing the dilution nightly until full strength could be used. However, they neglected to say how long this might take.

Based on research and personal experience, I've developed the following plan of action for douching with hydrogen peroxide. Please check with your doctor before trying any of the remedies I have outlined below.

#### *The Necessary Items for the Hydrogen Peroxide Douche*

You will be using the over-the-counter garden variety of *3% Hydrogen Peroxide* found at the drugstore in the band-aid aisle. There is a 35% *Food Grade Hydrogen Peroxide* that can be purchased and diluted down to a 3% mixture that is suitable. However, there is no reason to buy this type of peroxide when 3% is already available for pennies. If you should buy the 35% product, never use it with first diluting it to a 3% solution.

By the way, while over-the-counter 3% hydrogen peroxide is fine for douching, cuts, scrapes, and scratches. It's never safe to consume. It is not suitable for internal healing (swallowing or using intravenously).

When you see the word *douche* here, it means "rinse". Douching can imply a certain amount of water force, which is not what is needed. Simply installing the water into the vagina and letting it gently flow out is all that is required. So when you see the word "douche", think "rinse". The 3% hydrogen peroxide will not hurt the vagina, as the vagina creates its own hydrogen peroxide (H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>), but it is better to be gentle to such sensitive parts.

### *Items to Set Aside:*

- 3% hydrogen peroxide found at the drug store. It's going to be more economical to purchase the larger bottle for approximately \$2.
- A measuring spoon (1 tablespoon).
- A measuring cup.
- Use distilled water purchased by the gallon (approximately \$1.25 each). *Don't use tap water.* It contains chlorine and fluoride.
- Buy a travel-size douche bottle or funnel for smaller amounts of fluid (approximately \$2). Go to the store and buy a cheap, ready-made douche. Empty its contents, rinse out the bottle. You will be replacing the mixture with your peroxide and distilled water formula.
- Purchase a standard douche bag for using more significant amounts of water (approximately \$8).
- A timer or clock.

Once you have your douche prepared, apply a drop or two of your mixed solution, from the bottle or bag, onto the entrance of the vagina. You may feel a slight burning, which feels more like warming. If it burns too much for comfort, add a bit of water to your douche, just a little, and apply just a drop or two again. If you ever experience pain, stinging, or burning vaginally from the peroxide douche, use less peroxide in your douche.

Hydrogen peroxide is an antiseptic and anti-infectant. It cannot cure BV on its own, but it can eliminate infection caused by BV for a time while you are working on ways to boost your vaginal lactobacilli. Each day should bring more tolerance to using hydrogen peroxide due to increased healing, and you should be able to increase the amount of the peroxide accordingly.

If you prefer not to use a douching apparatus, you can use your finger to rinse the vagina with your douche mixture of choice (while following all other suggestions). You may choose from any of the three douching rituals below.

### **#1 Douche - 7-10 Night Rinse**

If you are experiencing the beginnings of a bacterial infection or just very light symptoms, you might douche with three tablespoons of 3% hydrogen peroxide mixed with 1-1/4 cups up to 4 cups (no less than 1/4 cup) of distilled water for seven evenings in a row, no more than 10. Use a standard douche bag. It will be able to hold this more significant amount of water.

- While douching, make sure you are not forcing the flow. You don't want to push the water up into your cervix, especially if pregnant. You only want to rinse out the vagina.
- Standing in the shower while douching or sitting on the toilet with your legs apart is fine.
- Allow the water to flow in and run back out gently.

- After the last of the water runs out, pat dry with a soft cloth.
- You may also rinse the vagina with pure water immediately after douching with the peroxide mix.

Most women report symptoms immediately improve after the first douche.

### **#2 Douche - 3-5 Night Rinse**

For more bothersome symptoms, you may douche with 1/4 cup (3 TB) of 3% hydrogen peroxide combined with 1/4 cup of distilled water up to twice per day (morning and evening) for 3-5 nights. You may use a small kitchen funnel or a travel-size douche bottle. If using half and half burns a bit too much, use douche #1 (above) and decrease the amount of water used each day. A travel-size douche bottle holds only 3/4 cup of fluid. Fill the bottle half with 3% hydrogen peroxide (or at least three tablespoons) and half distilled water (at least three tablespoons). Slowly and gently squeeze contents into the vagina while lying, sitting, or standing. Allow the water to flow in and run back out gently. After the last of the water runs out, pat dry with a soft cloth. You may also rinse the vagina with pure water.

### **#3 Douche - A One-Time Rinse**

This douche isn't for pregnant women or anyone who has severe vaginal irritation because it will burn and cause minor, sharp pains, not for long, but it *will* burn. You should use this douche when you first notice symptoms of BV or after being symptom-free for at least a week or two. Fill a travel-size douche bottle half full with 3% hydrogen peroxide (1/4 cup). Then, while lying flat in the tub with legs apart, rinse the vagina with the peroxide. Try to hold the peroxide in the vagina for 3 minutes. If it runs out, that's OK. Just lay there for your 3 minutes. Do not increase the time you lay there. Three minutes is sufficient. Then, rinse with water and pat dry. This douche can also be done on the last day of either Douche #1 or Douche #2 for added measure unless you are pregnant.

### **There are Limits to How Often One Should Douche with Peroxide**

For some, douching may have caused the very problem they are trying to eliminate. Rinsing out good bacteria, not douching correctly, or using feminine hygiene products that damaged 'good' vaginal bacteria can all harm the vaginal environment.

There doesn't appear to be an exact science regarding how often one may or may not douche. However, douching too often is considered poor practice. It disturbs the natural vaginal flora leading to the overgrowth of microbes other than lactobacilli, such as fungus and bacteria. However, when you are already bacterially imbalanced by infection, it can help to at least "anti-infect" while taking other measures to restore vaginal health. Please follow these guidelines for the douching methods listed above.

- *Do not force water into the vagina. Allow it to rinse instead gently. Do not use #1 Douche for more than 14 days.*
- *Do not use #2 Douche for longer than 3-5 days.*
- *Do not use full-strength peroxide more than once. You will see this recommended on other websites.*

### **Restoring Lactobacilli Post Douching**

Combine the *Hydrogen Peroxide Douche* with the use of vaginal acidophilus insertions (one tablet or capsule after each rinse session). Vaginal inserts will supply the vaginal environment with fresh live lactobacilli, which may help restore vaginal flora and pH and protect the vagina from recurrences. These inserts also work very well for yeast infections.

Look for an acidophilus formula that contains *L. reuteri* and *L. rhamnosus* (probiotics) in significant numbers (over 1 billion live cultures). Before bedtime, insert the capsule or tablet or place the contents of 1-2 capsules in a travel-size douche bottle and rinse gently with the solution. Then, pat dry.

So that you know, BV is resistant to most probiotics. They may not be of much help unless you are also on top of your *protease* enzymes that break down the biofilm (the protective shell the microbial bacteria are under).

### **After Your Douche (or for Problems with Itch)**

After douching, it is safe to apply a bit of olive oil, flax oil, vitamin E oil, or zinc oxide (or *A & D Ointment*) on the entrance and folds of the vagina to prevent urine or vaginal discharge from irritating your skin as it heals. Post-menopausal women often have thinner vaginal tissues, and fluids can irritate the skin, causing a secondary issue of inflammation and irritation. You may also choose this time to apply your hormone creams.



## Aloe Vera Juice & Gel

Aloe Vera gel or juice can be applied inside and outside of the vagina for itch relief. Aloe Vera gel can also be used as a base to dilute essential oils. However, never use the gel or the juice directly from the plant. You may also use virgin coconut oil, olive oil, or cocoa butter to coat the vagina lightly.

## Cabbage Leaves

It's said that cabbage leaves tucked on top of a sanitary pad can relieve itching and discomfort within a couple of hours.

## The Grapefruit Seed Extract Douche

Although the *Hydrogen Peroxide Douche* can keep BV symptoms at bay, the *Grapefruit Seed Extract* douche may go a step further. Since discovered in 1964, it has been tested and validated by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration and the Department of Agriculture, the Pasteur Institute in France, and numerous physicians as curing bacterial vaginosis. Grapefruit seed extract (GSE) works to erase symptoms of BV due to its ability to get through bio-film.

Grapefruit seed extract, sometimes referred to as *Citrus Seed Extract*, is available online in liquid concentrate and vegetable caps. You will want to purchase the liquid form for douching with, as you will be mixing it with water. I suggest using distilled or spring water, as chlorinated water can burn sensitive vaginal tissues. Grapefruit seed extract is included in some vaginal rinse products, such as *ProSeed Feminine Rinse*, available through VitaCost.com. It comes in regular and maximum strength formulas.

I suggest purchasing the *Maximum GSE* from Nutribiotic.com. Other, cheaper brands are offered through various online companies, but supplies seem limited, shipping costs vary, and, most importantly, ingredients aren't always disclosed. Follow the directions for douching according to product information.

Should you discover grapefruit seed extract is not for you, *Earth's Botanical Harvest* in Sandy, Oregon, makes a line of vaginal suppositories recommended by numerous alternative medicine practitioners that claim to cure BV. The suppositories have a cocoa butter base. I understand that only licensed practitioners can order from this company, so you might refer their website to your care provider for ordering purposes. Navigating their website can prove to be difficult, but the products are worth the effort.



### **Betadine or Povidone-Iodine Douche**

Last but certainly not least, *Betadine* may work to eliminate your bacterial vaginosis infection forever. Betadine is an antiseptic and disinfectant. Betadine solution has been used for years to eliminate symptoms of BV. While most studies suggest it works only for light or mild non-specific BV infection, this type of douche is also reported to cure a severe infection as well. It is most popularly used in *Summer's Eve Medicated Douche*, which is sold over-the-counter at most drug stores.

Each *Summer's Eve* box contains two travel-size douches. Small, premeasured packets of povidone-iodine are enclosed within each package to add to the bottles previous to douching. Walmart used to sell Betadine solution over-the-counter, but it's often kept in the pharmacy these days. Follow the directions on the product container, and do not use if you are allergic to iodine, are pregnant, or nursing.



Thank you for downloading *The Vaginal Complaints Guide*. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marie Joanne". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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