



Abnormal Vaginal Discharge

ศูนย์ : Women Health Center

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Have you ever experienced abnormal vaginal discharge? The unusual vaginal discharge can indicate other possible gynecological diseases. It is important to learn about abnormal vaginal discharge since it can be a warning sign for more serious diseases. In this article, we will provide you with information about the overview of abnormal vaginal discharge, the causes, the types, the diagnosis, and the treatment.

What is Abnormal Vaginal Discharge

Before learning more about abnormal vaginal discharge, let's learn more about the normal vaginal discharge first.

Vaginal discharge is a fluid that helps keep the vagina clean and infection-free. Vaginal discharge is completely natural; however, its colour, texture, and amount can differ, depending on health conditions and other factors, such as your age and the period of your menstrual cycle.

Abnormal vaginal discharge covers any abnormalities regarding vaginal discharge, signifying an underlying health condition. Unusual vaginal discharge can be a warning sign of a health problem, most commonly gynecological diseases.

Causes of the abnormal vaginal discharge

Have you ever experienced abnormal vaginal discharge can indicate other possible gynecological diseases. It is important to learn about abnormal vaginal discharge since it can be a warning sign for more serious diseases. In this article, we will provide you with information about the overview of abnormal vaginal discharge, the causes, the types, the diagnosis, and the treatment.

There are various factors contributing to abnormal vaginal discharge. Each type of unusual vaginal discharge has different causes. Hence, it is important to learn about the types, and the causes of each type.

1. Pelvic inflammatory disease

If you have pelvic inflammatory disease, your vaginal discharge will be foul-smelling, and you will feel heavy pain in the stomach or pelvic area. The symptoms are usually dominant after intercourse, while menstruating, or while urinating. It can also be a result of untreated STIs, such as gonorrhea or chlamydia.

2. Gonorrhea and chlamydia

Gonorrhea and chlamydia are STIs that produce yellow vaginal discharge. Sometimes, the vaginal discharge may be greenish or cloudy in colour. The abnormal colour is due to a cervix infection. You may experience symptoms, such as pain when urinating, stomach pain, and bleeding between periods as well.

3. Bacterial vaginosis

Bacterial infection is one of the main causes of abnormal vaginal discharge. The bacterial infection causes vaginal discharge to have a strong, foul scent, mostly fishy odor. Discharge can look gray, watery, and thin.

Despite the common misunderstanding, bacterial infection is not transmitted through intercourse. The active sexual activity can increase risks of bacterial infection.

4. Human papillomavirus or cervical cancer

Vaginal discharge caused by human papillomavirus or cervical cancer is usually bloody, brown, or watery with an unpleasant odor. Human papillomavirus spreads through sexual contact. The infection can also lead to cervical cancer. The possible symptoms also include pain while urinating, and unusual bleeding after sex or occurring between periods.

5. Yeast infection

The discharge caused by yeast infection is not usually smelly. However, it can be thick and white, looking similar to cottage cheese. A yeast infection can occur in the vaginal due to many reasons. Factors contributing to yeast infection are stress, diabetes, pregnancy, use of birth control pills, and a prolonged use of antibiotics (more than 10 days).

You may experience symptoms such as itching, irritation, or burning sensation around the vagina during sex or when urinating as well.

6. Genital herpes

Genital herpes can lead to thick vaginal discharge. It usually has a strong smell, especially after sex. A burning sensation when urinating is common. There may be sores and blisters appearing around the genitals with the symptoms of bleeding between periods.

Usually, this abnormal vaginal discharge offers no symptoms, or in some cases may experience mild symptoms. However, it is noted that if you experience symptoms once, they can occur repetitively throughout your life.

7. Trichomoniasis

Trichomoniasis is an infection caused by a parasite. It is often transmitted via sexual contact, sharing towels or bathing suits. The discharge resulting from this condition is usually yellow, green, or frothy with an unpleasant odor. You may experience symptoms such as vaginal pain, inflammation, or itching around the vagina, especially while having sex or urinating. Hence, treatments for this disease should also include examining all sexual partners.

What Does Normal Vaginal Discharge Look Like?

White vaginal discharge is common and natural. Typically, thick-and-sticky, white vaginal discharge will be found at the beginning or end of your menstrual cycle. This type of discharge has no strong odor. Normal vaginal discharge can have other characteristics such as

- Clear, milky-white colour or off-white.
- No strong odor.
- The amount of vaginal discharge in each period is usually similar. However, it varies to each person. Sudden changes in the amount of vaginal discharge is worth noticing.
- Normal vaginal discharge can be watery or sticky, depending on your hormones.

Other characteristics that are not mentioned above, for example, the vaginal discharge with an unpleasant odor or weird colour (yellow, brown, greenish) are considered to be unusual. Abnormal vaginal discharge can indicate the state of your health condition, especially relating to gynecological issues.

Types of Abnormal Vaginal Discharge

There are many types of abnormal vaginal discharge. Mostly, the characteristics of vaginal discharge can indicate the causes. Here are examples of types of unusual vaginal discharge, as categorized by its colour and texture.

Brown or bloody

Brown or bloody vaginal discharge is mostly considered normal, when it appears during or right after your menstrual cycle. The spotting (a small amount of bloody discharge between periods) may occur as well. However, spotting that occurs after sex without protection can be a sign of pregnancy. Whereas spotting during early pregnancy, mostly the first trimester, can be a sign of miscarriage.

Spotting can sometimes occur during the usual time of your period as well. It is important to keep track of your spotting in order to take good care of your health.

Clear and watery

The vaginal discharge can become clear and watery during ovulation. It is also common if you feel sexually aroused, or in case of pregnancy.

Yellow or green

Despite the oddness of its colour, yellow vaginal discharge is sometimes normal, considering the discharge gets exposed to air. The natural colour can change into yellow-ish. However, darker yellow or greenish vaginal discharge is considered to be health-related. If it has an unpleasant smell, together with the thick or chunky texture, you should seek medical advice.

Clear and stretchy

If you are ovulating, your vaginal discharge is clear and mucous-like, sometimes stretchy. This is considered normal.

When to see a Doctor for Abnormal Vaginal Discharge

Abnormal vaginal discharge can indicate many things: bacterial infection, STIs, or even other diseases. It is recommended that you seek professional advice as soon as you notice that your discharge has abnormally changed.

Consider seeing a doctor if you have unusual vaginal discharge with other symptoms:

- Increased urination.
- Pain when urinating.
- Fatigue.
- Fever.
- Abdominal pain during penetrative vaginal sex.
- Unexplained weight loss.

- Irritation around the vagina
- Bleeding between periods, after penetrative vaginal sex, or after menopause.

How is Abnormal Vaginal Discharge Diagnosed

How is abnormal vaginal discharge diagnosed?

First of all, the doctor will ask you about your medical history and your symptoms such as the characteristics of your unusual vaginal discharge.

Then the physical examination will be performed. A sample of the discharge may be collected or a Pap test will be chosen to collect cells from your cervix. These tests will help determine the causes and the exact diagnosis.

Treatment for Abnormal Vaginal Discharge in Bangkok

Treatments for abnormal vaginal discharge differ, depending on the causes. If your unusual vaginal discharge is caused by bacterial infection, then the doctor will prescribe antibiotics. Yeast infection is usually treated with antifungal medications. Whereas, Trichomoniasis is usually treated with tinidazole or metronidazole.

It is important that you seek professional advice in order to precisely diagnose the cause. Hence, the proper treatment will be conducted. If you are living in Bangkok and having abnormal vaginal discharge, we recommend Nakornthon Hospital. The Women's Center at Nakornthon Hospital offers you a one-stop service: diagnosing, treating, and preventing gynecological diseases. The experienced gynecologists will help you determine the cause and design the suitable treatment for you.

Conclusion for Abnormal Vaginal Discharge

The characteristics of vaginal discharge are important, especially if they appear to be unusual. Abnormal vaginal discharge can indicate a variety of conditions, including bacterial infections, yeast infection, and STIs. It is important that you take note of your discharge, and notice if there are any abnormalities. If you experience unusual vaginal discharge with symptoms, such as abdominal pain while having sex, increased urinating, or itching around the vagina, you should seek professional advice.

Online Consultation

