

birth weight babies, stillbirths, abortions or birth defects. Newborns can also get eye infection from the mother's birth canal, eventually leading to blindness and pneumonia.

Abnormal vaginal discharge

Usually discharge can be normal if it is for short time and without other symptoms like itching or pain. Most women have normal discharge during inter-menstrual period, and pregnancy. It is normal to have a small amount of discharge or wetness that comes from the vagina. A change in the amount, colour and smell may mean an infection. Many infections of reproductive tract in women show as foul smelling or bloody-yellow, greenish or curdy discharge.



Causes of abnormal vaginal discharge

- Lack of genital hygiene, especially during menstruation can facilitate infections.
- Use of unclean instruments during delivery, abortions by unauthorized providers.
- Sex without condoms especially when partner is suffering from some infections.

It is important to remember that these infections are easily preventable and curable.

Preventing infections

- Advise women and families to have deliveries in hospitals only.
- Deliveries should be conducted by skilled persons only.
- Abortions at registered hospitals only.
- Maintenance of genital hygiene during menstruation.
- Avoiding unsafe sex by use of condoms – women can't always insist on condom use by partner. They need to learn negotiation skills for condom use. Availability of female condoms may also save women in such situations.
- Women should be encouraged to seek treatment from qualified providers. You can help women get services by going with them to PHC/hospital in city. Women generally feel shy and awkward to talk about it.
- Complete treatment as advised by a qualified doctor is a must. The partner should also receive treatment in cases of STIs. Women