

# Vaginal discharge in pregnancy

Vaginal discharge is fluid made by the vagina and cervix that helps to keep your vagina moist and clean. It also helps to protect you from infection.

You may have more vaginal discharge than usual when you become pregnant. But a change in your vaginal discharge could be a sign of something that needs treatment.

It's important to know what's normal, and when to get medical help.

## Important

Do not spray water into your vagina or use scented or harsh products while pregnant. It is not safe to use tampons during pregnancy.

## Types of vaginal discharge

### Normal vaginal discharge

Don't worry about your vaginal discharge if it:

- is clear or white in colour
- has a mild smell (but doesn't have a strong or unpleasant smell)
- is sticky or slippery and wet

### Vaginal discharge in the 3rd trimester

Towards the end of your pregnancy, your vaginal discharge may increase again. This is normal but doesn't happen to everyone.

By the last few days of your pregnancy, it may have a thicker, more mucous or gel-like consistency.

### A 'show' as your body prepares for birth

Many pregnant women experience a 'show' in the last few days of their pregnancy. This is where you notice you have some vaginal discharge. It's generally thick and streaked with a pink jelly-like material.

This happens when the mucus that has been present at the neck of your womb (cervix) comes away. This is a sign that your body is preparing for the birth. Some women have several shows before they go into labour.

**If you have a show, you should contact your midwife or obstetrician immediately if:**

- you are less than 37 weeks pregnant
- the mucus is bright red and there is more than a small amount of bleeding from your vagina

## Things you can do that may help

### Do

- ✓ Use water or aqueous cream to wash your genitals - if you are using aqueous cream be careful not to slip, as it can make your bath or shower slippery.
- ✓ Wipe from front to back after going to the toilet.
- ✓ Have showers rather than baths.
- ✓ Pat your genitals dry after showering, bathing, or swimming.
- ✓ Wear underwear made from breathable fabrics like cotton.
- ✓ Get medical help if needed.

### Don't

- ✗ Do not douche (flushing, squirting, or spraying water or other cleaning products into your vagina).
- ✗ Do not use tampons.

[Contractions and signs of labour](#)

## When to get medical help

Go to see your GP, midwife or obstetrician if you have any of the following:

## Bleeding from your vagina

Get medical advice immediately. In early pregnancy, this could be a sign of [miscarriage](#) or [ectopic pregnancy](#). In later pregnancy, this could be a sign of a problem with your placenta

## Unpleasant or unusual smell from vaginal discharge

This could be a sign of an infection like bacterial vaginosis.

## Colour of discharge changes to green or brown

Get medical advice - within the next day. This could be a sign of infection like bacterial vaginosis or an STI (sexually transmitted infection).

## Itching around vagina or feeling uncomfortable

Mention this at your next appointment or sooner if you can't wait that long. This could be a sign of thrush.

## Pain on passing urine or blood in the urine

Get medical advice as soon as possible. This could be a sign of a urine infection.

### [Warning signs during pregnancy](#)

Page last reviewed: 19 July 2023

Next review due: 19 July 2026

This project has received funding from the Government of Ireland's Sláintecare Integration Fund 2019 under Grant Agreement Number 123.

## HSE Live - we're here to help

Monday to Friday: 8am to 8pm

Saturday: 9am to 5pm

Sunday: Closed

Bank holidays: Closed

Freephone: [1800 700 700](#)

From outside Ireland: [00 353 1 240 8787](#)

[HSE Facebook](#)

[HSE Twitter](#)

[HSE Instagram](#)

[HSE TikTok](#)

[HSE YouTube](#)

[HSE LinkedIn](#)

[HSE X \(Twitter\)](#)

[Complaints and feedback](#)

[Emergencies](#)

[Cookie settings](#)

[Cookie statement](#)

[Accessibility](#)

[Privacy statement](#)

[Disclaimer](#)

© Health Service Executive