Ask the Sexpert

Sexologist Rachael L. Ross, MD, PhD, a.k.a. Dr. Rachael answers your questions.

December 12, 2011 By Rachael L. Ross, MD, PhD

Q: Once and for all, is it necessary for women to douche?

A: Believe it or not, the vagina does a great job of cleaning itself, so you should not douche. The reason is because the vagina has an acidic environment and naturally occurring mucus that work together to keep the area clean. What's important to know is that a healthy vagina has a mild scent. But when the passageway emits a strong, fishy odor, or is irritated, this isn't normal and should be evaluated by your physician.

The surface of the vagina hosts a mix of good and bad bacteria. When you over-clean this passageway by douching, you remove all of the good bacteria—and that allows bad bacteria to multiply.
An overgrowth of bad bacteria increases your risk of developing vaginal irritation, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and bacterial vaginosis (an infection that causes the dreaded fishy odor).

To keep your vagina fresh throughout the day, neatly trim your pubic hair and apply a small amount of antiperspirant on it. Also, avoid long baths and use a mild soap to wash only the exterior of the vagina.

Once again, medicated wipes and douching are overhyped and unnecessary.

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/Sexpert-Women-Douche-21584-3518