



## HERE'S WHEN YOU SHOULD, ERM, BE MORE INTIMATE WITH YOUR PRIVATE ZONE.

# 1 You're bleeding, but it's between periods

This random spotting could be due to a hormonal imbalance, which happens when you skip a birth control pill. However, if abnormal bleeding happens more than once, it could be due to infection, abnormal growths or trauma to the vagina.

### 2 There's weird discharge

It lasts for more than three days, looks thick, greenish or yellowish, and smells. This could be due to a fungal infection.

# 3 You feel pain for more than two days

If the pain is accompanied by a lump, that could be a sign of an abscess caused by an infection, ingrown hair or oily skin, which can be treated with antibiotics if detected early. If there is a crop of painful blisters, this could be due to herpes, a sexually transmitted disease.

#### 4 It itches

This is most commonly due to a fungal infection, which is usually associated with a greenish-yellowish curd-like discharge. It could also be part of skin conditions like psoriasis or eczema.

### 5 There is a bump

It could be a harmless skin tag, which looks like a skin-coloured bump hanging from a stalk, and is usually caused by chafing (when skin rubs against skin). A more serious problem might be genital warts, a sexually transmitted infection.

**EXPERT SOURCE:** Dr Chee Jing Jye, obstetrician, gynaecologist and medical director at The Obstetrics & Gynaecology Centre, a Singapore Medical Group clinic

# A HEALTHY VAGINA...

... is a happy one. Take note.

Get him to change condoms when switching from oral to vaginal sex, so you don't introduce bacteria into your privates.

Keep it loose. Avoid wearing too-tight jeans, thongs or wet bathing suits for prolonged periods. These retain heat and moisture, creating ripe conditions for a yeast infection, says Dr Christopher Ng, obstetrician and gynaecologist at Gynae MD Women's & Rejuvenation Clinic.

#### Wash with caution.

When showering, clean just your vulva with a gentle soap – your vagina self-cleanses with discharge. Also, avoid douching, which can reduce the pH levels of your vadge, leading to yeast infections.

Have a V-friendly diet.
Fill up on vitamin A-rich
soya, tofu and flaxseed
to relieve vaginal
dryness. Love yogurt?
Good – it contains
lactobacillus, which
could help stave off a
urinary tract infection
(UTI), says Dr Ng.

Pee after sex. This is reportedly one of the best ways to ward off UTI because it helps to flush out bacteria in the urethra.

See your gynae.
Go for a Pap smear once you turn 21 or become sexually active (whichever is earlier). Get one every three years until you're 65, advises Dr Ng.

#### Skip panty liners.

They absorb vaginal discharge and trap heat down there, increasing your risk of a yeast infection.

