

5 strange things that may happen to your vagina during pregnancy

From bulging veins to colour changes, learn ways in which your lady bits might change when you're having a baby.

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POSTED: 19 MAR 2020 UPDATED: 09 APR 2020

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If this is [your first pregnancy](#), you may realise that [your body](#) is going through some [startling changes](#). These can range from [unstable joints](#) and [swollen ankles](#) to even painful [backaches](#).

[Growing a baby for nine months](#) may also do a number on [your lady bits](#). But if you observe unusual things happening to your [vagina](#) — such as colour variations or vaginal discharge — don't panic!

Most of the time, these [vaginal changes](#) are perfectly normal and don't signal a problem with your pregnancy. That said, do check with your ob-gyn when these changes occur, to ensure you don't have any [underlying health conditions](#).

Here's our guide to the fascinating things that may happen to your vagina when you are pregnant.

1. Changes in the colour of your vagina

A startling change you may observe is your vagina turning blue or purplish. But don't fret — you aren't turning into a Smurf or one of those Na'vi creatures in the *Avatar* movie.

An increase in the vascularity of the vagina, beginning early in pregnancy, parallels the vascular changes in the uterus, Adele Pillitteri writes in *Maternal & Child Health Nursing: Care of the Childbearing and Childrearing Family*.

Bleeding that happens during the second and third trimester may also be a cause of concern... Such bleeding may be due to [placental abruption](#), [preterm labour](#) or a premature [dilation of the cervix](#).

“The resulting increase in circulation changes the colour of the vaginal walls from a normal light pink to a deep violet (a probable sign of pregnancy).”

These colour changes are also known as Chadwick's Sign — named after American gynaecologist James Read Chadwick, who drew attention to the condition back in 1886.

Pillitteri also adds that this change in vaginal colour may occur as early as four weeks into conception, making it one of the [earliest signs of pregnancy](#).

This bluish or purple hue should also disappear shortly after you've given birth, so rest assured you won't have to live with an oddly-coloured vagina for the rest of your life!

2. Blood and spotting in the first trimester

“Fluctuations of pregnancy hormones ([progesterone](#) in particular) can lead to [vaginal bleeding](#) in the first trimester,” explains [Dr Christopher Ng](#), a gynaecologist at [GynaeMD Women's & Rejuvenation Clinic](#).

While any expectant mum would fret if they experience vaginal bleeding, it doesn't necessarily signal a [miscarriage](#).

“[Vagina bleeding](#) is usually successfully managed in most cases with some rest and consuming oral or intramuscular progesterone,” [he](#) assures.

However, if [vaginal bleeding persists](#) despite these measures or worsens with [pelvic pain](#), see a gynaecologist immediately.

“One may need to go for a pelvic [ultrasound scan](#) to exclude the possibility of a [spontaneous miscarriage](#),” [Dr Ng](#) notes.

Bleeding that happens during the second and third trimester may also be a cause of concern, especially if accompanied by severe, [menstrual-like cramping](#). In such cases, seek medical care immediately. Such bleeding may be due to [placental abruption](#), [preterm labour](#) or a premature [dilation of the cervix](#).



3. Changes to your vagina's pH level, making you more vulnerable to vaginal infections

“As a result of increased pregnancy hormones, the [natural pH of the vagina changes](#) from a mildly acidic environment to a mildly alkaline environment,” [Dr Ng](#) explains.

Unfortunately, this also makes your nether regions more vulnerable to [yeast](#), [bacterial](#) and [urinary tract infections](#).

“When the genital pH becomes alkaline, there is a more conducive environment for bacterial and fungal infections to develop,” [Dr Ng](#) points out.

However, you have ways to keep lower genital tract and urinary infections at bay during pregnancy.

“The vagina's natural pH may be restored by using specially-formulated, mildly acidic feminine hygiene washes containing probiotics,” [he](#) advises. “Women may also wish to consume oral probiotics daily. [Probiotics](#) increases the natural vaginal flora (friendly bacteria), which, in turn, restores the vagina's mildly acidic environment.”

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regions more vulnerable to yeast, bacterial and urinary tract infections.”

4. Varicose veins

Varicose veins are twisted, enlarged veins that are often dark purple or blue in colour.

“It is not unusual to find varicose veins during pregnancy in the vulva, calves and the inside of the legs,” notes Dr Ng.

As he explains, they occur as a result of foetal growth and increased blood volume, maternal weight and intra-abdominal pressure. This, in turn, puts increased pressure on the veins, accompanied by venous valve failure. As a result, a backward flow of blood occurs, which gives rise to the bulging and prominent blue veins.

Dr Ng states, “For the majority of women, varicose veins tend to occur in the mid- to latter part of pregnancy. However, it is not uncommon for them to surface in the first trimester as well, and they can occur within two to three weeks of gestation.”

Predisposing factors for women include a family history of varicose veins as well as increasing maternal age. If varicose veins occur during early pregnancy, he observes that hormonal fluctuation is the likely cause.

He advises, “The condition can be managed by wearing compression stockings and taking oral medication like Daflon. Women can also be assured that surgery is rarely needed during pregnancy, with the majority of cases spontaneously resolving after delivery.”

5. Increased vaginal discharge

Don't be surprised if you notice an increasing amount of normal vaginal discharge during your pregnancy. This is usually a result of elevated levels of pregnancy hormones.

“Under the influence of oestrogen, the vaginal epithelium and underlying tissue become hypertrophic and enriched with glycogen,” Pillitteri writes. “This increase in activity of the epithelial cells results in a white vaginal discharge during pregnancy.”

In addition to its white colour, the discharge should be odourless, thin and look milky. It usually doesn't indicate any inflammatory or infectious illnesses, or lower genital tract infections. In fact, this discharge may be a defence against potential infections.

Dr Ng explains, “Sometimes, women may get exposed to a potential vaginal infection. The body's natural defence mechanism would be to produce more physiological vaginal discharge, in an attempt to naturally cleanse the vagina and get rid of the potential infection.”