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BACKGROUND

Women and Vaginal Health

Vaginal health is integral to a woman's overall health and well being. The vagina has its own ecosystem in which Lactobacillus, (the good bacteria) that is predominant in a normal, healthy vagina plays a vital role in protecting the delicate balance. Lactobacillus maintains a healthy acidic environment of the vaginal ecosystem with a pH that can range from 3.8 to 4.2.

When the pH balance is upset, for example by infection or use of over-the-counter douching products with harsh chemicals, the level of good bacteria drops too low and there's an elevated level of harmful bacteria. Discharge and a strong, unpleasant odor are telltale signs that there is an imbalance of the vaginal ecosystem. Bacterial Vaginosis (BV) is a common bacterial infection with strong odor. BV is treatable with antibiotics. Not all vaginal odor is caused by infection. There are millions of women experiencing vaginal odor without any infection and doctors were frustrated that there wasn't any treatment for these women until now.

Traditional Douching – Why Doctor's Orders Have Been: Don't Douche!

OB/GYNs have long held differing opinions about recommending over-the-counter douching products, which require a patient to insert harsh chemicals (Detergents i.e., N9) into the vagina. These chemical-based douches wash away Lactobacilli, disrupting the vagina's eco-system and weakening the vagina's defense system. There are also concerns that traditional douches may introduce bad bacteria into the cervix, uterus and fallopian tubes. In one study, it was found that women who douche with over-the-counter douches at least once per month are more than 40 percent more likely to contract BV than women who never douched.¹ BV has also been linked to other health issues including the acquisition of sexually transmitted diseases, HIV, preterm birth and pelvic inflammatory disease.

In addition, over-the-counter douching products may have scents or other chemicals (detergents i.e., N9) that could upset the pH of the vagina. Deodorants and scents may irritate and just cover up the problem. Given the downsides of chemical-based douches, many patients have heeded their doctor's advice and have steered clear of them. For those who use chemical douches, many have mixed results and find that symptoms reoccur. They also report that plastic douching nozzles are uncomfortable.



A New Option for Those with Non-bacterial Infection Odor

For women suffering from vaginal odor not linked to a bacterial infection, there's now an FDA-approved and clinically proven alternative douching system that enables a woman to gently clean her vagina in a non-disruptive way using the gentlest of ingredients – tap water. It's an alternative without the hassles and chemicals of traditional douching. Why tap water? It's safe, natural and proven to maintain a normal pH level of the vagina.

¹October 2002 issue of *Obstetrics and Gynecology*