Hi Alice,

My girlfriends and I are debating something: Are baths bad for the vagina?

**Answer**

Dear Reader,

Hopefully you and your girlfriends didn't bet a lot of money on this question because there isn't a clear winner? baths are not necessarily bad for vaginas. However, it's true that taking bubble baths (creating the bubbles by adding soap, including fragranced soaps and oils) can cause irritation of the vagina. This is because the vagina has a natural balance of "good" and "bad" organisms. Any disruption in the balance of these organisms can lead to vaginitis, an inflammation of the vagina. Vaginitis is an umbrella term for a number of conditions:

- **Bacterial vaginosis:** Just like it sounds? an overgrowth of bacteria. Check out Bacterial vaginosis [2].
- **Yeast infections:** These are caused by a fungus called candida albicans. See Yeast infection prevention [3] for more information.
- **Atrophic vaginitis:** This is caused by low levels of estrogen, and usually occurs post-menopause.
- **Non-infectious vaginitis:** This includes itching, burning, or irritation caused by an allergic reaction to sprays, perfumes, scented tampons and pads, etc.

There is some evidence that bubble baths may increase susceptibility to yeast infections. But don't toss your rubber ducky just yet! You don't have to stop taking baths altogether, but try to cut down on soaps and other products that may contain perfumes or dyes. Taking a shower first to get clean (use the soap here) and then taking a bath without soap, can also reduce the chance of getting vaginitis, just be sure that the bathtub is clean. The bottom line is that to prevent vaginitis the vagina should be free of irritants (including soap) and should be dried thoroughly after bathing. For more tips on how to avoid vaginitis check out the links above and related Q&As below.

Splish, splash,

Alice!

Category:
Sexual & Reproductive Health [4]
Women's Sexual Health

Related questions

- Letting my vagina breathe at night
- Yogurt for yeast infections?
- Is blowing air into the vagina dangerous?
- What is bacterial vaginosis?

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  - Content Use
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  - Comments & Corrections
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Links