Dear Alice,
Recently I have discovered if I change the settings on my shower head so the water pressure is harder and faster it works wonderfully as a tool for masturbation. My question is, is there any health risks for using water for self pleasure? My main concern is getting water in my vagina...could that cause issues? Thank you so much!

— Fun in the Shower

Answer

Dear Fun in the Shower,

Showerhead-as-masturbation-tool is an excellent discovery and spraying water on or around your external genitals is A-OK, but you're right — you shouldn't let water spray into your vagina. Not to rain on your parade, but there are several possible risks. Sending the shower stream into the vagina could mimic douching (see Douching [2] for more info), which is now widely recognized as being bad for vaginal health. Spraying water inside can rinse away healthy bacteria and other organisms naturally found within and upset the vagina's slightly acidic environment. This increases the risk of problems like bacterial vaginosis and yeast infections.

Douching on a regular basis, or before or after sex, may also increase the risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), like chlamydia or gonorrhea. These infections take advantage of the absence of regular vaginal flora to come in and set up shop. It can also irritate vaginal tissue, which may make you more susceptible to STIs. And, if you do have any foreign intruders, douching can force them into the upper genital tract (the uterus, fallopian tubes, and abdominal cavity). A contaminated douche or showerhead can also introduce new infections. Infections can even lead to pelvic inflammatory disease, a condition that can cause decreased fertility, infertility, and ectopic pregnancies.

Another possible (but rarer) risk of spraying water inside your vagina is that you could force air inside your body and potentially cause an air embolism. An air embolism is a pocket of air that enters the blood stream. If an air bubble reaches the heart, lungs, or brain, it could cause permanent damage or even death. Although this is unlikely, it's still a great reason to keep your showerhead fun to stimulating external areas, like the labia, clitoris, breasts, nipples, or any other...
erogenous zones that float your boat.

All that said, go ahead and enjoy your showerhead.

Here's to singing in the rain,

Alice!

Category:
Sexual & Reproductive Health [3]
Women's Sexual Health [4]

Related questions

Getting rid of a yeast infection [5]
Getting the details on gonorrhea [6]
Douching [7]
What is bacterial vaginosis? [8]

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