...antrin ...ut are good for building ...e retina of the eye, these are mainly

The liver produces large amounts of cholesterol every day to make hormones, vitamin D, and substances that help you

levels and regulates your immune system in fighting disease."

Compiled by Beatrice Nakibuuka

Things you must never do to your vagina

Most women know some of the factors that can harm the health of your vagina such as a lack of hygiene, wearing tight clothing or having unprotected sex, among others. However, there are many women that worry too much about the appearance of their genitals and end up making mistakes when looking after them.

BY CHRISTINE KATENDE
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According to health experts, the vagina is self cleansing through production of vaginal secretions and the normal vaginal flora (helpful bacteria). Victoria, a former prostitute, always used soda every after intercourse saying it helped to refresh her vagina thus enticing customers.

She says after prolonged use, she started getting infections and when she visited a doctor, he advised her to stop immediately.

Apart from infections that may arise from using dirty toilets and infections (STDs) from sexual intercourse, Dr Alex Kakoraki, a general physician at Murchison Bay Hospital in Luzira, says using herbs, wearing non-cotton underwear, among other habits may be harmful to the vagina.

Wiping incorrectly

Dr Kakoraki says it is vital for feminine intimate hygiene that you dry yourself properly after using the toilet.

"Because the anus is very close to the vagina, it can transfer bacteria from one part to the other. This bacterium can mix with vaginal mucosa, which is highly susceptible to infections," he says adding, "The correct way to clean yourself after using the toilet is to start from the vagina and move backwards to the anus. In other words, from front to back.

Foreign objects

Dr Kakoraki says foreign objects such as test tubes, carrots and egg plants can cause infection if inserted into the vagina.

Apart from carrots and egg plants that may be dirty, other materials such as tubes can accidently break and remain in the canal which puts the woman's life in danger.

Women who use such things for masturbation get infections and one can only tell by having an abnormal discharge that comes with an unpleasant smell, according to Dr Kakoraki.



If you have sensitive skin or an allergy, check with your doctor about the best way to approach your vaginal hygiene. NET PHOTO

Tight underwear

Kakoraki says the underwear or trouser should not be too tight but rather comfortably fitting. Very tight panties can cause moisture in the vaginal area. This creates a favourable environment for bacteria to build up thus causing infection.

Steaming

Jonathan Kabasa, a clinical officer at Mengo Hospital, says although steaming the vagina seems to be quite popular nowadays, steam treatments have resulted in burns and irritation in the intimate area.

Douching

Kabasa says excessively cleaning your vagina is also not good for its health. He says that using vaginal douches can disrupt the balance of healthy bacteria inside the vagina.

Some gynecologists consider douching to be the cause of pelvic inflammatory disease and bacterial vaginosis. "The best thing you can do for your vagina is to wash it with water and a pH-neutral soap when you take a bath or shower. Clean it with a clean towel, but do not rub too hard," he says.

Vaseline as lubricant

Dr Kakoraki says vaseline and any other products that contain petroleum can cause vaginal infections if used as a lubricant. If you want to use something as a lubricant, use a high-quality professional oil with a neutral pH.

Wearing panty liners

According to *gurl.com*, an online platform, panty liners were created to absorb vaginal discharge experienced at the beginning and end of every period. Therefore, using them everyday can harm your intimate health, because its daily use makes the groin area more hot and humid.

As a result, the vagina transforms into a perfect area for breeding bacteria. This causes vaginal infections and increases the amount of vaginal discharge.

"If you use these products regularly, then we recommend that you reduce the amount of times you use them or change them more frequently. Ideally, you should be changing them every four hours," the page recommends.

Popping pubic acne

According to Dr Herman Sewagudde, no matter how painful or uncomfortable your pubic acne may be, puncturing or breaking the pimples is never a good idea. When you puncture the pimple's outer skin, the pus oozes out with all the bacteria in it.

If this harmful bacteria reaches other skin pores, it can lead to more pimples.

"Breaking the acne can even force the debris and bacteria deeper into your skin, causing more redness, inflammation and swelling on the affected area. This may even lead to permanent scarring. Also, if the acne-prone area itches, try not to scratch. It can cause serious irritation. It is best to allow the acne to run its course," he says.

Choosing the best knickers

The key to choosing healthy panties is to consider the situation and make a choice that feels right. For example, when you are exercising, the healthiest panty is made from a moisture-wicking material and gives you full coverage. If you are just out and about, cotton is arguably the best material. Sometimes, the healthiest pair of panties is none at all. Sleeping without any panties prevents moisture, which can cause a rash or even a yeast infection.

Caution

Kabasa cautions women to always clean or wash the vagina after having sex and also go for routine screening of STIs, cervical cancer and vaccination. In case of any odour, Kakoraki also advises a visit to a health professional for help.

NATURAL ODOUR

According to Dr Alex Kakoraki, a general physician at Murchison Bay Hospital in Luzira, the vagina is a hot and humid internal organ which means it sweats but has an odour that is completely healthy.

He advises that you should only worry when:

- The odour is stronger than usual.
- You experience itching with this odour.
- You start to experience abnormal vaginal discharge.



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