

Douching — NOT!

Douching is the process of rinsing out the vagina with water, a variety of store products, vinegar, baking soda and many other preparations.

What reasons do women give for douching?

- "I smell cleaner."
- "My mother told me to."
- "It helps get rid of blood at the end of my period. "
- "It rinses sperm or semen out of my vagina after sex."
- "I think douching after sex reduces my risk of STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases)."

What are reasons NOT to douche?

Recent studies show that **women who douche seem to get more PID** (infection of uterus, tubes, and ovaries). This may be because water and bacteria are forced up into the cervix (opening of the uterus) when you douche.

Women who douche may get more BV (Bacterial Vaginosis) infections. BV is caused by large number of abnormal bacteria in the vagina. BV may lead to problems in pregnancy; such as early delivery, problems with labor and possible infection in the fluid that holds the baby in the uterus.

What is a good way to clean the vagina?

- Don't douche with *anything!* The vagina does a great job of cleaning itself naturally with normal secretions (fluids).
- Feminine hygiene sprays, powders and wipes are not necessary. Mild soaps (like Dove) and warm water are the best cleaners for the outside lips of your vagina. Don't use very hot water or anti-bacterial/deodorant soap. Your vaginal tissue is very sensitive.
- If you or your partners feel you have a problem with bad odor or discharge, come to the clinic for a check-up. You might have an infection that could be treated.

If you have questions about douching, STDs, BV, or any other issues of sexual health and well being, call City Clinic at **487-5500** and get more information.

Annual 'checkups': anemia check, pap smear, breast exam, internal pelvic exam, family planning advice and STD testing are available for women at City Clinic. Call for an appointment or call for our walk-in hours.

REMEMBER: Using condoms (male or female) correctly every time you have sex with a man can help keep your vagina clean and healthy, while also preventing STDs and HIV.

For more information about STD's, consult these websites:

<http://www.noah-health.org/>
<http://www.ashastd.org/>
<http://www.cdc.gov/std/>
<http://www.dph.sf.ca.us/sfcityclinic/>
<http://www.sfsi.org/>

Women's Resources:

<http://www.ppgg.org/>
<http://endabuse.org/>
<http://www.4woman.gov/>

Teen Resources:

<http://www.iwannaknow.org>
<http://kidshealth.org/teen/>
<http://www.teenhealthfx.com/>



A landmark in prevention

For a STD check-up or treatment,
see your doctor, local clinic, or come to:

City Clinic
356 Seventh Street
(between Folsom and Harrison)
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415)487-5500
<http://www.dph.sf.ca.us/sfcityclinic/>