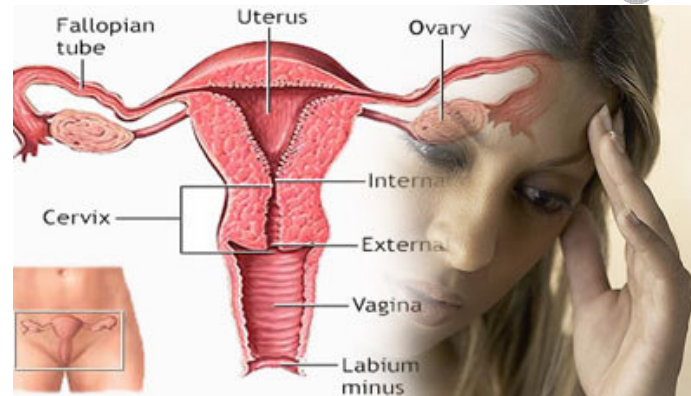


Leucorrhoea

a common disease among women



Leucorrhoea is common among the women of almost all ages the world over. This disease was recognised thousands of years ago by the ancient therapists in the ancient societies like India, Greece and China.

Mucous membranes and glands in our body produce a lot of secretions, which have their own separate functions. The secretions protect our body by forming a slimy lining over the skin or mucous membrane. It also helps to keep the mucous membrane or skin moist and flexible. The best example to understand is ; saliva in the mouth. If this secretion becomes very low, everyone will feel dryness. The skin may crack thus paving way for infection. Similarly, vaginal glands also secrete some secretions to keep the organ moist, flexible and to prevent it from infection by its acidic nature. At ovulation time, the acidic nature of the secretion gets altered to alkali nature by hormones to allow the male sperm to survive for fertilisation. If not, the sperms will find it difficult to thrive and reach the ovum. Also, secretions of the vagina help in lubrication during the sexual act.

Leucorrhoea, a vaginal discharge is a universal problem of all women. Leucorrhoea is a medical term for white discharge which is an excessive secretion from the female reproductive tract especially from the vagina or cervix or both. It is very common in females nowadays. It could be embarrassing, painful and may cause lot of discomfort, stress and even affect the sexual preferences and libido. It may be mild to severe, and varies from person to person.

Leucorrhoea is mainly classified into two types:

Physiological leucorrhoea : It is an excessive discharge or secretions of a normal vagina. They are slimy in nature and generally occur among teenaged girls due to hormonal imbalance during puberty, at the time of ovulation period of the menstrual cycle, before periods, etc. In case of adults, in addition to the ovulation time and before periods, it occurs also during early days of pregnancy and during sexual excitement. Generally, no medication is required in this kind of discharge.

Pathological leucorrhoea : It is a discharge occurring due to disease or malfunction of the female reproductive tract. It needs immediate attention, cleanliness and treatment. Ignoring pathological leucorrhoea may lead to serious problems like loss of fertility or even removal of uterus. The nature of discharge

varies from slimy to thick bloody discharge with foul smell. This condition is commonly present both in case of vaginitis or cervicitis.

Causes of Leucorrhoea :

1. Infections :

From Fungus : Candida albicans can easily flourish in moist circumstances and is commonly promoted by synthetic undergarments and poor hygienic condition.

From Parasites : protozoa - Trichomonas vaginalis causes the Trichomoniasis which spreads usually through sexual intercourse and moist clothes.

From Bacteria : Gardnerella vaginalis and chlamydia are the prime causes in bacterial infections. Also, it is frequently seen in venereal diseases like gonorrhoea, syphilis, and AIDS.

2) Injury : Injury to the vagina or cervix or womb during childbirth, abortion, or excessive sexual indulgence can cause erosions and infections with discharges.

3) Poor hygienic conditions : Non hygienic measures, especially during periods, can create infection and cause leucorrhoea.

4) Diabetes and anaemia : May provoke infections due to weakened immunity among many females.

5) Local infection : Spread of infection from adjacent urinary tract (UTI) or alimentary tract (worms)

6) Irritation of IUCD : If irritation persists at **IUCD**, (Intra uterine contraceptive device) it can cause pain and discharges.

7) Sprays and jellies: which are used by males for provoking sexual act and jellies and drugs taken by females to kill sperms to avoid conception can also irritate and initiate the infective process.

Symptoms of leucorrhoea :

Mostly there won't be any symptom other than discharge. Discharge may be slimy, viscid to dark coloured or even bloody with a foul smell. In some cases, the accompanying symptoms are:

- Lower abdominal pain
- Painful sexual act
- Backache and pain in the leg, especially thigh and calf muscles
- Intense itching with oedema of vagina
- Soreness and burning in the genital tract
- Burning urination and frequent urge to pass very little urine
- Irritability and lack of concentration in work due to consciousness of discharges
- Digestive disturbances like constipation or diarrhoea or vomiting
- General tiredness due to loss of vital fluids as discharges
- Soreness and dryness
- Strong smelling or frothy discharge
- Dark coloured discharge
- Rashes or sore spots on the genitals.

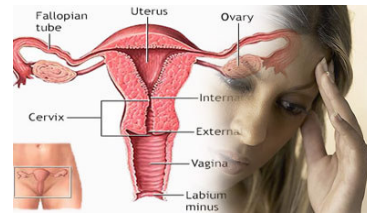
Diagnosis : leucorrhoea is generally found to be hormonal. The occurrence, time and nature of the discharge also points out the diagnosis. Mostly, it can be easily differentiated as physiological or pathological leucorrhoea by a vaginal smear. It clearly tells us about the presence of bacteria or virus or fungus. Also, sometimes cervix biopsy is absolutely necessary to rule out cancer of the cervix. Culture and sensitivity test is helpful in identifying the bacteria, if any, and also provides the right choice of the drug to treat it. Routine blood test gives some idea about the infection. And, finally, urine test is also a must to rule out the spread of infection.

Why we should be alert with leucorrhoea :

- In case of chronic infection, and if left untreated, the infection spreads inward into the cervix, uterus, fallopian tubes, etc., causing congestion of the uterus or ovary or pelvis, leading to heavy menstrual flow in the forthcoming period.
- It acts as a precursor of pelvic inflammatory diseases, salpingo-oophoritis (infection of fallopian tube and ovaries) which mostly result in pelvic adhesions like peritoneal adhesions and fallopian tube adhesions which obstruct tubes and may cause infertility.
- White discharges in late fertile period or after menopause should always be analysed completely to rule out cervix cancer which is the second commonest site of cancer in females after breast cancer.
- Urinary tract, reproductive tract and the adjacent organs are often caught in the spread of infection simultaneously since the urethra, vagina and anus lie very close.

PREVENTION is always better than cure.

- Wash genitals everyday
- Wear clean underwear every day
- Always wash genitals from front to back.



Strictly avoid :

1. Sprays, deodorants, and strong perfumed soap and bath products.
2. Stress since it may affect the hormonal level and may increase secretions.
3. Sharing towels and underwear
4. Synthetic or nylon underwear which cause dampness of genital organs. Always wear cotton underwear to avoid moisture.
5. Sexual intercourse during heavy discharges
6. Sexual intercourse without condoms while under treatment
7. Do not stop treatment when symptoms disappear – the full course of treatment is very important. Abstain from sexual intercourse during treatment to avoid irritation of tissues, which are in the process of healing.

Always Take

1. Nutritious diet, especially food rich in vitamins A, B, C, E, magnesium and zinc, to improve general health
2. Plenty of water and juices to avoid urinary tract infection and its spread to the vagina or cervix.

Leucorrhoea : Home remedies & Ayurveda

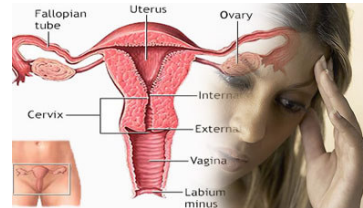
India is a land of Rishi Mnunis and Ayurveda. There are over 500 plants in several parts of India which has a great medicinal value. Some of the plants in India are so good for health

that our ancestors associated their significance with religion so that people take care of such plants. Ethno-botanical study on medicinal plants is receiving much weight and it is integrated among the sophisticated investigation in India all through the recent years. The current article is on the use of herbs for curing leucorrhoea. Follow guidelines from your family doctor before using any of the formulation we mention. Our aim is to document the indigenous knowledge and present it to our readers. In no case these formulations be considered as the substitute for prescriptions. It is only for your knowledge.

In the Ayurvedic terminology, Leucorrhoea is called Shwet Pradar. It is a common disease among women worldwide. Leucorrhoea or whites is a condition in which there is a whitish discharge from the vagina. It may be thick and viscid, and foul smelling if it is caused by some infection. Ayurveda says that due to imbalance in the body, the kapha dosha gets aggravated. Consequently, the kapha reaches yoni (vagina) and due to its physical and chemical characteristics, white coloured, thin or thick, foul smelling fluid called leucorrhoea, is discharged. It can also be due to the inflammation of the womb following childbirth, displacement of the uterus, or gonorrhoea. Among young females, it may be due to threadworms, as the result of general debility combined with lack of cleanliness or infections.

There are two types of Leucorrhoea, physiological and pathological. In physiological Leucorrhoea, the discharge is normal due to excitement or other factors like nervousness. Such a discharge need not be worried about. It is found under following conditions:

- Seen in newborn baby for a week due to maternal oestrogen.
- Seen in girls during puberty due to hormonal changes.
- At the time of ovulation
- In early pregnancy.
- During sexual excitement.



In pathological Leucorrhoea the causes are:

- General ill health
- Anaemia
- Dysfunctional state in genital tract.
- Infection
- Other Psychological factors.

The Pathological Leucorrhoea needs immediate attention and medication. Delaying the treatment could lead to serious consequences.

There are a number of causes of this diseases but generally it is caused due to unhygienic conditions and microbial infection in female genital tract. A weaker immune system is also an important factor to cause leucorrhoea. However, the following causes could be responsible for leucorrhoea as per Ayurveda :

- Hormonal and metabolic reasons
- Improper hygienic conditions
- Improper feeding habits
- Indigestion and constipation
- Anaemia and diseases like diabetes, menorrhoea etc.
- Wound created by itching
- Infections like bacterial and fungal
- Sedentary life styles

Symptoms of Leucorrhoea :

In addition to the whitish discharge from the vaginal tract, there is weakness as well as pain in the lumbar region and the calves. A burning sensation may be present along with constipation. There appears to be a direct relationship of this disease with a nervous temperament. The patient develops black patches under the eyes. Late nights precipitate the attack.

- Irritation and itching on genital organs, which could be worse at night.
- Indigestion
- Constipation
- Headache and vertigo is often observed.
- Discharge generally observed on undergarments.
- Foul smell generally present.
- General body weakness.
- Dullness on skin and dark circles generally present
- Frequent mood changes.

Precautions :

- Proper care of hygiene should be taken care of.
- Undergarments should be washed carefully to avoid any infections
- Diet should be taken in limited amount with light and easily digestible foodstuff.
- Exercises should be included in daily life style
- Proper rest and sleep are a must
- Avoid spicy food like pickles.

Home Remedies :

A proper diagnosis of the disease must be made and the cause removed. In addition to the medicine prescribed below, a regular douching of the genital tract with the decoction of the bark of the banyan tree or the fig tree is very helpful. A tablespoon of each of the powders of the barks of the two trees should be boiled in a litre of water till it is reduced to about half. Douching with the lukewarm decoction keeps the vaginal tract healthy and clean.

- **Amalaki seeds powder :** The powder of this is very beneficial for the treatment of leucorrhoea. A 2-3 grams / day with Honey / Sugar will relieve the White Discharge.
- **Chandana athar:** Five drops of Chandana Athar (Sandalwood oil) to be taken with Peyan vazhaippazham (Plantain) twice daily.
- **Mango seed powder:** Mango seed powder in the dose of 1-2 gm's twice daily cure leucorrhoea.
- **Guava:** Tender leaves of guava are useful in the treatment of leucorrhoea.
- **Walnut leaves:** A decoction of fresh walnut leaves for douching will reduce leucorrhoea.
- **Coriander(dhania) seeds:** A home remedy used in this condition is to soak about ten Gms of dry Coriander(dhania) in 100 ml of water overnight, and to drink the water in the early morning. It gives relief in seven to eight days in most cases.
- **Fenugreek seeds:** Fenugreek seeds are valuable in leucorrhoea. They should be taken internally in the form of tea and also used as a douche. As a douche, the solution should be much stronger than tea. Two tablespoons of fenugreek seeds should be put in a litre of cold water and allowed to simmer for half an hour over a low flame. The decoction should then be strained and use as a douche
- **One banana** twice a day with ghee proves beneficial.

- **Turmeric** mixed with garlic (if discharge is less dense) or guggulu (if discharge is thick) gives very good results.
- **Chopchini** (Smilax china) powder mixed with milk helps.
- **Shatavari** (Asparagus racemosus) mixed with ashwagandha (withania somnifera) has great potency in treating leucorrhoea
- **Guggulu** (Commiphora mukul), giloye (Tinospora cordifolia) and shilajit mixture is also beneficial.
- **Supari** (Areca catechu) with gulukand (rose petals in sugar) is very beneficial.
- **Pushyanug Churna** : 5-10 gm twice daily.
- **Patrangasaya** : 15-30 ml twice daily after meals with
- **Dry Amla** and Julethi in equal quantities, powdered and mixed with thrice the quantity of honey is an effective drug for this disease.
- Pradrantak Lauh: 1 gm thrice daily. To be taken with honey.

Herbs : Symplocos racemosa (Indian name Lodh), Asparagus racemosus (Indian name Chatwal, Satawar, Satmuli, or Shakakul), Pueraria tuberosa (In Hindi it is known as Sural, Bilaikand, Bharda, Tirra, or Bankumra), Adhatoda zeylanica (In India it is known as Arusa or Bansa), Aegle marmelos (generally known as Bail), Emblica officinalis (We know this as Amla) and Azadirachta indica (Neem in Hindi or Nimm in Punjabi)

Preparation: Symplocos racemosa (3 ½ tbsp), Asparagus racemosus (1 ½ tbsp), Pueraria tuberosa (1 tbsp), Adhatoda zeylanica (1 tbsp), Aegle marmelos (1 tbsp), Emblica officinalis (1 tbsp) and Azadirachta indica (1 tbsp).
Grind, mix and take daily twice a day 2 to 3 gms.

Diet : Fried and spicy foods are to be avoided. The patient should be encouraged to chew Betel nut (supari) after meals: it has a curative effect and also prevents the development of the disease.

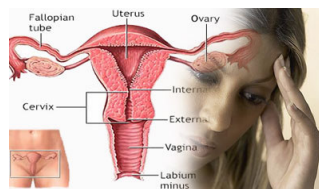
Other measures : A cold hip bath taken twice a day for ten minutes at a time, will help relieve congestion in the pelvic region and facilitate quick elimination of morbid matter.

Yoga also has some good Asnas like Sarvang and Vajra besides Pranayam.

Conclusion : Like all other diseases, take leucorrhoea seriously and consult your doctor without delay. Many medicines are available in the market, over the counter also, but consult your G.P. and try to take prescribed drugs only.

(Source: Ayurved Nighantu / Dr. Deepak Acharya / justeves and hpathy.com / British Medical Bulletin)

Dr. A. Kumar
Consultant



Prevention is better than cure!

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