

Pregnancy &gt; Your Health

## 9 Things You Didn't Know About Your Vagina

by **What to Expect Editors**

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Does the G-spot really exist? It stretches *how much* down there during labor? And can exercise really get it in shape? Read on as a few doctors share some fascinating insight about the vagina.

**1. Your vagina will triple in width during birth.** Many pregnant women worry about how a baby can possibly fit through there during delivery — but rest assured, it will. "The average normal width of a vagina is approximately three to four centimeters, but during pregnancy hormones are secreted that prep it for its great expansion. By the time you push your baby out, your vagina just about triples its width — to 10 centimeters — to fit the baby's head," says Dr. [Pari Ghodsi](#), M.D., F.A.C.O.G., who has an obstetric practice at Northlake OB-GYN in Plano, Texas. She notes that some babies are bigger than others, and some vaginas are a little less elastic, which is why some moms [tear a bit](#). "Luckily, the vagina has tons of blood flow, which makes it a great healer," says Dr. Pari. By the time you visit your doctor at [your first postpartum check-up](#) (which should take place around the three-week mark), [your vagina will most likely be close to its normal size](#).

**2. Your vagina is full of bacteria, good and bad.** Like the rest of your body, "there are tons of different bacteria — good and bad — that live in your vagina," says Dr. Pari. Occasionally, something can throw off that balance — new soap, detergent, sex, condoms, lubricant, exercise, tight clothing — and the bad bacteria can overgrow the good, resulting in [bacterial vaginosis](#) (which is more common during pregnancy). "This overgrowth of the bad guys causes a clear or yellow discharge and a foul odor, and you need to see your doctor to fix it," says Dr. Pari.



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**3. It's impossible for a tampon to disappear up there.** It's a common fear among women that a tampon can get lost. Not possible, says Dr. Pari. "If you can't find a tampon, there are a couple of options: It fell out; it's crammed at the very back of your vagina and you can't reach it; or you took it out and forgot doing so. It is impossible for it to travel anywhere else." She explains that the vagina is closed around the cervix (the neck of your uterus that opens to let the baby out during labor), creating a dead-end cul-de-sac. When the cervix isn't dilated (like it is in labor), the hole is way too small for a tampon to pass through. That means there's no way it could get lost somewhere else in your body. "It's either in your vagina or it's not. If you are unsure, make a quick appointment with your doctor. People always feel so embarrassed about coming in for this, but they shouldn't," says Dr. Pari.

**4. In addition to the G-spot, there's an A-spot and a U-spot.** The G-spot is a collection of sensitive tissue located approximately one third into your vagina, says Dr. Pari. But did you know there is also an "A-spot," which can be found a little farther north than the G-spot? "The anterior fornix erogenous zone, or A-spot, is not as spoken about, but it's believed to increase lubrication and stimulate orgasmic contractions," says [Dr. Kecia Gaither](#), Director of Perinatal Outreach at Montefiore Medical Center and Albert Einstein College of Medicine, in the Bronx, New York. But wait...there's also the U-spot. "The U-spot is a small patch of sensitive tissue located just above that and on either side of the urethral opening, with strong erotic potential when stimulated," says Dr. Gaither.

**5. Sweating down there is normal.** Why does it sweat down there? And is it healthy? "It sweats down



clothes...and covered in hair," says Dr. Pari. While it's normal to have some sweat from your vagina, if it's to the point that you feel uncomfortable or are soaking through your underwear, you should talk to your physician.

**6. They come in different sizes and shapes.** "It is normal to have two outer lips and two inner lips — but after that there are a lot of variations. Some are longer, some are shorter, some are even, some are uneven. This is all normal," says Dr. Pari.

**7. The vagina is incredibly self-sufficient.** Simple soap and water is all you need to keep your vagina healthy. In fact, frequent douching can offset the careful balance of bacteria in the vagina. Even many "vaginal care" products use perfumes and dyes that can throw pH levels off-kilter and cause infections (like bacterial vaginosis) — so don't use them. Instead, Dr. Gaither recommends eating more yogurt, which contains the probiotic bacteria lactobacilli that may help maintain the vagina's normal balance.

**8. Your vagina is intuitive.** Your vagina gives you clues to when it's your most fertile time of the month. "Upon ovulation, many women experience an increase in vaginal discharge — it's actually cervical mucus being expelled...which serves as a telltale sign of when chances of reproduction are optimal," notes Dr. Gaither, who says clear and rubbery mucus (that looks similar to egg whites) signals ovulation (which means time to get busy!).

**9. Regular exercise does a vagina good.** Strengthening the pelvic floor muscles by practicing Kegel exercises not only helps prep your vagina for labor and delivery, but it's also the best way to help you get back your vagina's elasticity back after birth, says Dr. Gaither. It's also easy to do anywhere, anytime. And it's never too early (or late) to start!

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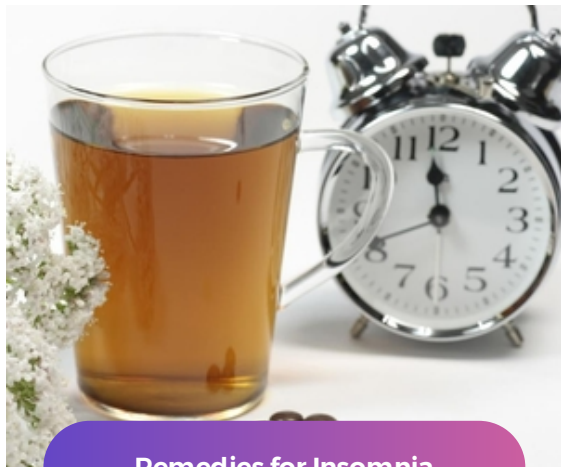
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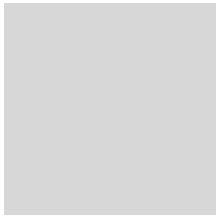
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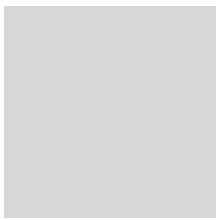
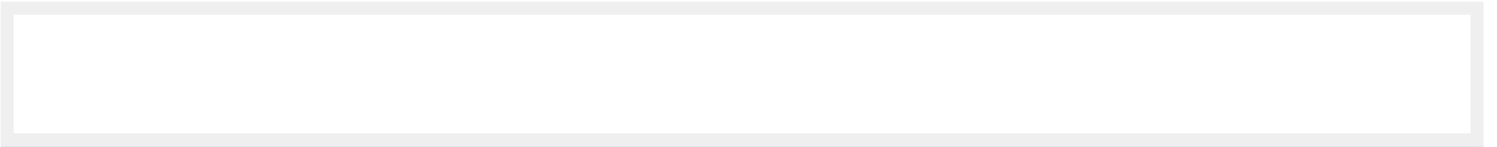
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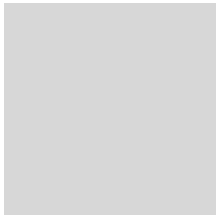
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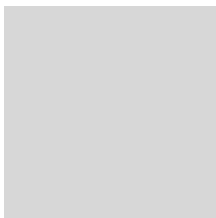
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