

Leukorrhea

Information for women who have leukorrhea during pregnancy or breastfeeding

The information provided below is for readers based in the United States of America. Readers outside of the United States of America should seek the information from local sources.

What is leukorrhea during pregnancy?

Leukorrhea is a clear, white, or yellowish vaginal discharge that is generally odorless and mild. During pregnancy, it is normal to experience a certain amount of leukorrhea as the discharge results from changes in the body caused by increased levels of estrogen during the first trimester. Sometimes, the leukorrhea can be a sign of an [infection](#) with bacterial organisms, particularly *Chlamydia trachomatis* or *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*.

How common is leukorrhea in pregnancy?

Approximately 40 percent of pregnant women experience some kind of vaginal discharge.

How is leukorrhea diagnosed?

Leukorrhea is diagnosed based on your report of the vaginal discharge and its characteristics, especially feelings of wetness. Your doctor may want to take samples of the discharge, or of other vaginal material, to send for laboratory testing to see if there is an infection, such as *C. trachomatis* or *N. gonorrhoeae*.

Does leukorrhea cause problems during pregnancy?

Normally, pregnancy leukorrhea is simply the result of hormonal changes, leading to increased blood flow to the vagina, causing discharge. In this case, the main problem is discomfort. However, the condition can also be an indication of infection such as *C. trachomatis* or *N. gonorrhoeae*. These are sexually transmitted infections (STIs) that often occur together and that can be transmitted to other people, give you local discomfort, and in some cases spread through the body, putting you at risk of complications. Certain characteristics of the discharge can hint that an infection is more likely, for instance, if the discharge is particularly heavy, if it's chunky, and if it has a foul odor.

Does leukorrhea during pregnancy cause problems for the baby?

Usually, leukorrhea is harmless; it does not cause problems for the baby. However, if the discharge is the result of an STI, there is an increased risk of [miscarriage](#), preterm birth, low birth weight, infections in the newborn, and birth defects.

What to consider about taking medications when you are pregnant:

- The risks to yourself and your baby if you do not treat the leukorrhea
- The risks and benefits of each medication you use when you are pregnant
- The risks and benefits of each medication you use when you are breastfeeding

What should I know about using medication to treat leukorrhea during pregnancy?

Uncomplicated leukorrhea does not require treatment. If there is a bacterial infection, such as *C. trachomatis* and/or *N. gonorrhoeae*, antibiotic treatment is needed. There are several antibiotic medicines from which to choose, some of which are considered to be fairly safe in pregnancy. [Amoxicillin](#), for instance, is the recommended treatment of chlamydial infection in pregnant women. Your doctor will help you decide what antibiotic is best for you and your particular infection.

Who should NOT stop taking medication for leukorrhea in pregnancy?

In the event that your leukorrhea turns out to be the result of an STI, it is very important to complete the prescribed antibiotic regimen. Under such circumstances, nobody should stop treatment on her own. However, you should remain in contact with your physician and report side effects, as there are several situations in which it could become necessary to switch from one antibiotic treatment to another.

What should I know about choosing a medication for leukorrhea in pregnancy?

You may find Pregistryst's expert reports about the individual medications used to treat leukorrhea [here](#). Additional information can also be found in the sources listed at the end of this report.

What should I know about taking a medication for leukorrhea when I am breastfeeding?

In the event that your leukorrhea turns out to be the result of an STI and you require an antibiotic, there are antibiotics that are considered safe to use in a breastfeeding setting. Your doctor will help you choose the best medication for you and the infection you have.

What alternative therapies exist besides medications to treat leukorrhea during pregnancy?

As noted earlier, leukorrhea is normally harmless. Thus, in most cases, there is not much that you need to do, other than being prepared to change your undergarments and/or use pads to absorb discharges. If you do have an infection though, and that infection is curable with antibiotics, then it is a good idea to follow that course of therapy.

What can I do for myself and my baby when I have leukorrhea during pregnancy?

Bear in mind that the condition is very common and generally manageable. If it turns out that you have an infection, cooperate with your physician to assure a complete recovery.

Resources for leukorrhea during pregnancy:

For more information about **leukorrhea** during pregnancy, contact <http://www.womenshealth.gov/> (800-994-9662 [TDD: 888-220-5446]) or read the following articles:

- What to Expect: [Vaginal Discharge During Pregnancy \(Leukorrhea\)](#)
- Mayo Clinic: [STDs and Pregnancy](#)

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General information

It is very common for women to worry about having a miscarriage or giving birth to a child with a birth defect while they are pregnant. Many decisions that women make about their health during pregnancy are made with these concerns in mind.

For many women these concerns are very real. As many as 1 in 5 pregnancies end in a miscarriage, and 1 in 33 babies are born with a birth defect. These rates are considered the background population risk, which means they do not take into consideration anything about the health of the mom, the medications she is taking, or the family history of the mom or the baby's dad. A number of different things can increase these risks, including taking certain medications during pregnancy.

It is known that most medications, including over-the-counter medications, taken during pregnancy do get passed on to the baby. Fortunately, most medicines are not harmful to the baby and can be safely taken during pregnancy. But there are some that are known to be harmful to a baby's normal development and growth, especially when they are taken during certain times of the pregnancy. Because of this, it is important to talk with your doctor or midwife about any medications you are taking, ideally before you even try to get pregnant.

If a doctor other than the one caring for your pregnancy recommends that you start a new medicine while you are pregnant, it is important that you let them know you are pregnant.

If you do need to take a new medication while pregnant, it is important to discuss the possible risks the medicine may pose on your pregnancy with your doctor or midwife. They can help you understand the benefits and the risks of taking the medicine.

Ultimately, the decision to start, stop, or change medications during pregnancy is up to you to make, along with input from your doctor or midwife. If you do take medications during pregnancy, be sure to keep track of all the medications you are taking.