

Vaginal Rinses After Vaginoplasty

How to do vaginal rinses at home

This handout provides step-by-step instructions for doing vaginal rinses after vaginoplasty surgery.

Why do I need to do vaginal rinses?

During the first few weeks of recovery after your vaginoplasty, you may notice some yellow-brown discharge. This is normal. The vaginal sutures are healing, and the skin of the vagina is adjusting to its new environment.

You will need to do vaginal rinses to help the discharge move to the outside of the body. In the weeks right after your vaginoplasty, you will do vaginal rinses 3 times each day (morning, afternoon, and bedtime).

Your surgical team will determine when your vaginal sutures have healed enough to begin and stop the rinses. You may find it helpful to do rinses after your vaginal dilations.

How do I do vaginal rinses?

Your nurse or surgical team will teach you how to do vaginal rinses before you are discharged from the hospital. The inpatient nurse will give you the supplies you need to take home with you.

You can do the rinses while reclining on your bed, in an empty bathtub, or on another flat surface. Be sure to lie on top of a towel, waterproof pad, or bedpan.

Vaginal Rinses Step-by-step:

1. Get your supplies: Red Robinson catheter, 60 mL syringe, lubricant, saline solution, and an 8 oz. cup.
2. Wash your hands.
3. Pour 8 oz. (240 mL) of saline solution into the cup.
4. Draw up 60 mL of saline solution into the syringe.
5. Attach the full syringe to the end of the Red Robinson Catheter.
6. Apply a small amount of lubricant to the tip of the catheter.

7. Spread your legs and insert the catheter 2 to 4 inches into the vagina.
8. Start pushing on the plunger of the syringe. This will start the vaginal rinse.
9. When the syringe is empty, disconnect it from the catheter. Leave the catheter inside the vagina.
10. Repeat steps 4 through 9 for a total of 4 syringes-worth of rinse solution (240 mL).
11. Once you complete 4 rinses, remove the catheter from the vagina. Disconnect the syringe from the catheter and pull the plunger out of the syringe.
12. Always remember to wash these items and allow them to dry after each use. Once dry, place them in a plastic zip-top bag until the next vaginal rinse.
 - For the first week after surgery, throw away the catheter and syringe at the end of each day.
 - After the first week, you can use the same catheter and syringe for 1 week at a time. Wash all 3 items with mild soap and water.
13. Wash your hands.

After your surgical team says you are healed enough to stop daily rinses, you should still do vaginal rinses weekly. You can do this by soaking in a tub of warm water (about 5 inches deep) for 10 to 15 minutes once per week.

Preparing the Vaginal Rinse Saline Solution

For at least the first 2 weeks, you will need to do your vaginal rinses with saline solution. After your surgical team says it is okay to do so, you will change your rinse solution to normal tap water mixed with a couple drops of unscented baby shampoo.

To Make the Vaginal Rinse Saline Solution:

1. Bring one gallon of water to a rolling boil. Then, add 1 tablespoon of table salt.
2. Continue to boil for 10 minutes.
3. Cool the solution to room temperature and store it in a clean, sealed container.
4. You can use this solution for up to 24 hours. After 24 hours, you will need to prepare new solution.

How to Do Vaginal Rinses for Bacterial Vaginosis

Bacterial vaginosis is an infection in the vaginal canal. If your provider suspects you have bacterial vaginosis, they will change your saline solution to a vinegar-based solution. You will also likely be given antibiotics.

To Make the Vinegar-based Solution:

1. To make an 8 oz. solution (240 mL): Add 2 oz. (60 mL) of vinegar to 6 oz. of water (180 mL).
2. Rinse with at least 16 oz. (480 mL) twice a day for 2 weeks.
3. After your provider has cleared you to do so, begin using normal tap water mixed with a couple drops of unscented baby shampoo. Usually, this change will happen after 1 to 2 weeks.
4. If symptoms persist, let your provider know.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Provider name:

Clinic phone number:
