

Viva Health

Issue 02 | January - March

M A G A Z I N E

MORINGA

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go a day without
this superfood

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Talk to our Senior Project Manager, Medical Tourism Services

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Moringa

Why you shouldn't go a day
without this superfood

I dare say Moringa Oleifera is the superfood of all superfoods. A brave claim, but not one that is misplaced. In the past few years, almonds, matcha, kale and turmeric among many others have had their time in the spotlight, nonetheless moringa is a more dominant legend than most.

Its little, unassuming, delicate leaves contain all the nine essential amino acids man needs, making it a total protein source. It's additionally rich in iron, nutrient B6, and potassium and over 90 other nutrients in varying proportions. Just so you can appreciate the nutritional value of this superfood, allow me to make the following illustrations. A single gram of Moringa contains 25x iron of spinach, 9x the protein of yoghurt, 10x the vitamins in carrot, 15x potassium in banana and 17x calcium of milk. The health benefits this nutrient-dense super plant brings to the table are just amazing. No wonder moringa is called the miracle tree.

History of Moringa

Moringa tree started on the Indian subcontinent around 2000 BC. There, it was utilized in the history of the moringa traditional medicine for 300 conditions ranging in severity from minor skin imperfections to increasingly serious ailments like asthma, hypertension and coronary illness, ulcers, kidney stones and respiratory diseases like tuberculosis.

From India the use of moringa spread to old Egypt, where it was utilized as a characteristic sunscreen to secure against the cruel desert condition; and after that in the long run to Greece and Rome where it served as both an ointment and expensive fragrance.

The advancement of the plant likewise moved westbound into Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands (most quiet the Philippines), where its remarkable nourishing characteristics made it become a staple vegetable in the neighborhood diet. Moringa is developed around the world Today, both far and wide, basically in areas with harsh climate conditions where the numerous utilizations for Moringa are required most—places like Ethiopia, Haiti, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia and Uganda since Moringa trees can grow almost anywhere - they are resistant to drought, deep rooted and can tolerate a wide variety of soils, enabling them to flourish in even the harshest of conditions.

Nutritional Benefits

Despite the fact that there are numerous organic products in the market, the natural standard we currently have does not ensure that those items are free of contaminants or that they have the full scope of nutrients and minerals they should. That implies that despite everything, we need to eat high sustenance nourishment to enhance our day by day nutritional intake. Moringa is the most ideal approach to ensuring this - it is an entire sustenance and every part of the tree from the flowers to the roots can be used. Moringa leaves in particular can be consumed both fresh and dried (the leaves, when dried, often have a higher concentration of nutrients and maintain their nutritional value for years without refrigeration). The Moringa Leaf Powder has a high concentration of nutrients like calcium, potassium, zinc, magnesium, iron and copper.

Vitamins like beta-carotene of vitamin A, vitamin B such as folic acid, pyridoxine and nicotinic acid, vitamin C, D and E. Through the daily intake of Moringa, individuals have reported Moringa's ability to aid various ailments and illnesses. Some research indicates that Moringa may help improve vitality, stabilize glucose and cholesterol levels (diabetes), reduce circulatory strain (hypertension), aid assimilation of nutrients (digestion), help with discomfort because of diminished irritation, more milk creation for nursing moms, reduces skin breakouts, provide more iron sufficiency than some iron supplements (anemia), weight reduction and many more.

Moringa seed oil is also helpful in regenerating skin cells and can be used for diverse skin conditions such as eczema, diaper rash, athletes foot, gum disease, dry skin, scars among others. The residue generated from extracting the oil called the Moringa seed cake is mostly used for water treatment since it contains positively charged proteins that serve as effective coagulants for water.

How its Used

You may be wondering how you may include moringa oleifera in your diet, and it is quite easy. You may simply use powdered moringa leaves as a condiment, and sprinkle a tablespoon over a meal. Similarly it can be used in the preparation of soups, stews and even smoothies to give it a nutritional boost.

Apart from the leaf powder, other products that facilitate the easy consumption of moringa include moringa teas, moringa energy bars and moringa capsules. For those more interested in consuming it fresh, it may be prepared no different than spinach or cocoyam leaves (Kontomire).

About Us

Moringa connects mission in Ghana MoringaConnect is an MIT-Harvard spin-out on a mission to move smallholder farming families from poverty to prosperity through moringa. Our vision is to create a world powered by the moringa tree- a crop known locally as 'the miracle tree' for its nutritional, medicinal, and economic value.

In Ghana, we have built the first vertically integrated moringa supply chain in the world to turn moringa leaves into nutritious beverages and snacks under our Minga Foods brand in Ghana and turn moringa oil seeds into hair, face, and body beauty products under our award-winning True Moringa brand in North America. Since Q4 2013, we've created 150 jobs along the value chain for women and youth, provided \$600K in income to moringa farmers, built a network of 5000 farmers, and planted over 2,000,000 trees.

MoringaConnect was founded by an MIT-trained rocket scientist and Harvard-trained economist and our leadership team and advisers bring to bear decades of expertise in sustainable agriculture, agro-processing, food formulation, cosmetic chemistry, retail distribution, marketing, and advertising. We are backed by world-class venture investors, as well as top impact investors. Our work has been featured in Forbes, the Harvard Business Review, Good Morning America, The Guardian, Quartz, and Upworthy.

Where you can get Moringa to buy?

Right here in Ghana, our products under our Minga Foods brand includes Minga Moringa Powder, Minga Moringa teas [lemon grass, peppermint and pure moringa], and our moringa Energy Bars [Cocoa crunch, Sweet and Spicy, Fruit and Nut]. We also have pure moringa oil available. All these can be purchased in over 20 retail stores across Ghana including Wild Gecko, Farmers Market, Twist and Locks and Judi Foods.

8



Things That Happen to Your Body When You Eat Chia Seeds

C

hia seeds are incredibly beneficial for our overall health, and their addition to a daily diet prevents numerous ailments and diseases. These seeds are low in calories, but high in important nutrients, and what's more, they taste delicious with all the different food groups.

1. They are full of nutrients

Chia seeds are abundant in nutrients, and a small one-ounce serving of chia seeds contains:

- 11 grams of fiber
- 4 grams of protein
- 9 grams of fats (5 grams of that are omega-3s)
- 18% of daily recommended calcium
- 30% of daily recommended manganese
- 30% of daily recommended magnesium
- 27% of daily recommended phosphorus
- Zinc
- Vitamin B3
- Potassium
- Vitamin B1
- Vitamin B2

2. High in antioxidants

These healthy seeds are a rich source of antioxidants, which fight free radicals and prevent premature aging and cancer. Antioxidants also protect the fats in these seeds and improve the health of the skin and hair.

3. Fight chronic inflammation

These miraculous seeds are an excellent way to lower the number of inflammatory markers in the blood. Researchers have found that the introduction of chia seeds into the regular diet leads to about 40% reduction in the inflammatory markers.

4. Improve brain function

Chia seeds improve the function of the brain, by enhancing all elements of brainpower: focus, energy, discipline, intelligence, ambition, and motivation.

5. Improve heart health

Chia seeds lower the risk of heart disease since they are full of fiber, protein, and omega-3 fatty acids. Namely, they fight inflammation, regulate blood pressure lower triglycerides and insulin resistance, and prevent the accumulation of belly fat.

6. Weight loss

Chia seeds are rich in soluble fiber and protein, so they create a feeling of satiety, reduce appetite, and help weight loss.

7. Lower blood sugar

Chia seeds regulate blood sugar levels by improving insulin sensitivity and thus lower the risk of obesity, stroke, asthma, high cholesterol, coronary heart disease, and metabolic syndrome.

8. Boost energy levels

Chia seeds energize the body and can be a perfect replacement for a sports drink, without the added sugars.

Note that the recommended daily dosage of chia seeds for adults is 40 grams, divided into two portions of 20 grams, consumed twice daily. 20 grams is equal to about 1 1/2 tablespoons.

In conclusion, Chia seeds have been identified as a superfood in the diet world. It has become a magic wand to help you attain all your nutritional goals. Eat it up!!!!!!



5

Things to Prepare before you visit your Doctor Visit



By Major Dr Carl Nutsugah



Have you recently seen a doctor, either for the annual exam or for a specific condition? For many people, it is a challenge to remember everything that you need to tell the doctor, such as your medications, your health concerns, etc

However, this information is often asked during the visit and will help the doctor to have a complete picture of your health status. A little preparation will make the process much easier and smoother.

Here is the homework that you need to do to prepare for a doctor visit:

1. List your illnesses and/or health concerns. Keeping an informal log of your medical conditions, treatment, notes from previous doctor visits, test results, etc. has been highly recommended by primary care doctors, according to a survey among primary care physicians. Be sure to prepare a few questions to the doctor.

2. Provide information about diseases that run in your family. Family medical history allows doctors to see whether you have a higher-than-usual chance of having common disorders, such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and certain cancers

3. Make a list of your providers and pharmacies. The doctor needs to know what other care you are receiving. It would also be nice to have the contacts of pharmacies and other facilities you received care from.

4. Make a list of the medications you are taking. These should include prescription medication, over-the-counter medications, herbal preparations, vitamins, and supplements. You also need to include information on dosage of these medications.

5. Monitor your lifestyle, including things like smoking, drinking, physical activity, diet, etc. This information may trigger some important discussion and will help the doctor to give you most helpful advice.

On average, we only have 15 minutes to see the doctor. Getting the necessary information ready before your doctor visit will make your visit more productive. You can create a "Medical Information Sheet" to have all your medical information on one document.



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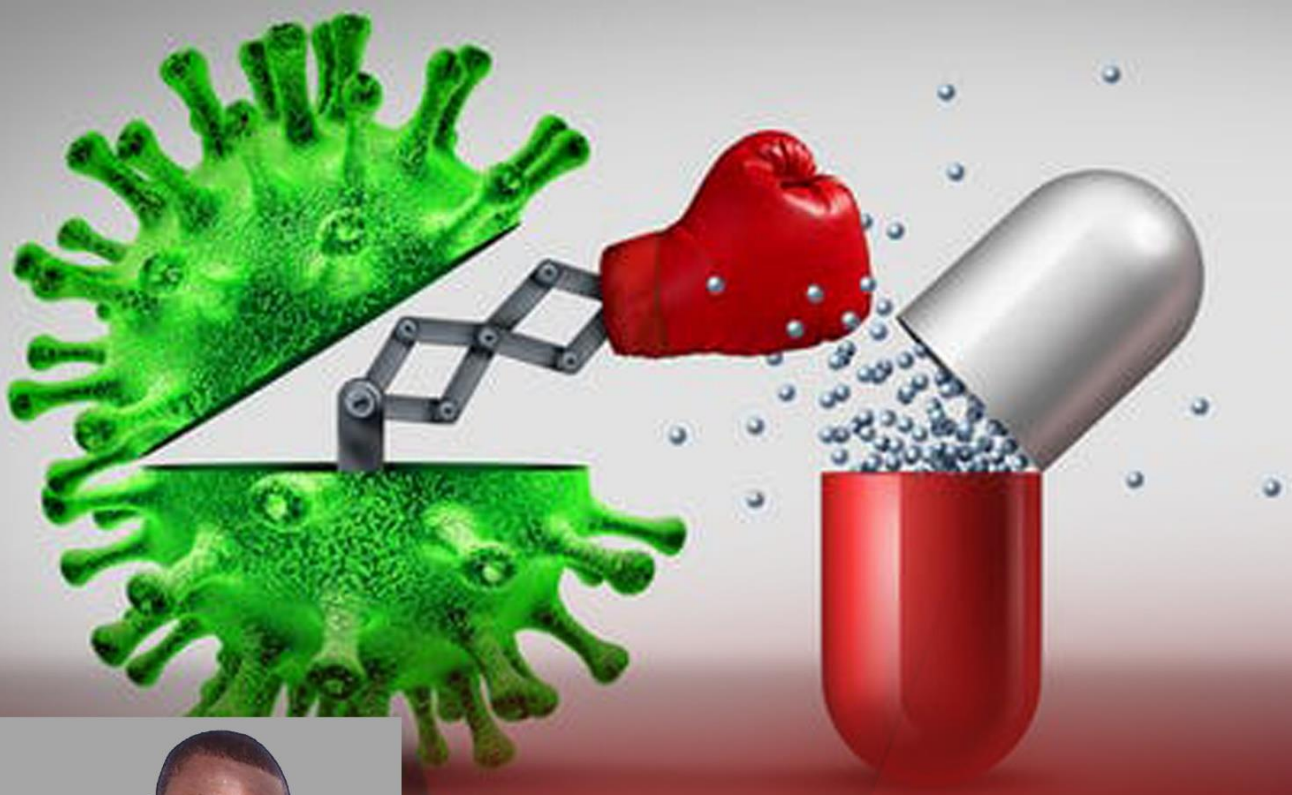
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By Major Dr Rossi Adu Gyamfi Yeboah

The Antibiotic Resistance Apocalypse: Another Global Warming Theory?

Even though possibly debatable, antibiotic resistance is one of the most discussed issues in the field medicine in recent times.

The concern has been the increase rates at which bacteria have been mutating and sharing resistant genes among themselves in order to outsmart newer, better, and most importantly expensive antibiotics. This is on the backdrop that industries are only able to create a new antibiotic every thirty to fifty years. To the alarmist, there will come a time when these superbugs will be the cause of most infections. At risk of sounding a little technical, I will hazard an attempt to explain how these resistance strains are developed and how the various types of antibiotics have been.

Even long before I could decide on making a career in medicine, I could confidently tell anyone that a drug called amoxicillin can treat abdominal pain. As I was a child at that time, your guess could be as good as mine. I have probably heard same said several times in different quarters. As to how true that statement was, I will not be able to authenticate.

Scientifically speaking, amoxicillin, a type of penicillin, is one of the medications used in what we called triple or quadruple therapy in the management of peptic ulcer disease, inflammation of the stomach (gastritis) or duodenum (duodenitis). Of interest, these conditions are some of the most common causes of abdominal pain. It will therefore be safe to speculate that these individuals who used amoxicillin for abdominal pain could probably have been suffering from any of the conditions mentioned before.

Another story I would like to tell is how pneumonia, which is an infection of the lungs, used to be treated effectively with amoxicillin alone when we suspect the infection was contracted outside the hospital or a boarding institution (community acquired pneumonia). This however changed even before I completed my medical education and much stronger and more expensive antibiotics are now used to treat the same condition. What then changed? In order to not to bore my readers with long winding and meandering write up, I will try to make a nutshell of my presentation.

Generally, bacteria are divided into two main groups. Unlike gram-positive bacteria, gram-negative bacteria do not retain colour when they are immersed in crystal violet and have thin cell wall. There also exist other minor subgroups such as those that cause tuberculosis and chlamydia that are usually not classified into the two main groups.

On the other hand, antibiotics are able to kill or restrict bacteria growth through various mechanisms. They do so by destroying bacteria cell wall, inhibiting cell membrane function, destroying already existing bacteria DNA and RNA or inhibiting synthesis, destroying or suppressing bacteria protein and protein production thereby suppressing bacteria metabolism.

Over the years, these organisms have been able to fight back most of the antibiotics thrown at them by either producing chemicals (enzymes) to breakdown the antibiotics, change their structure and prevent antibiotic from binding and destroying it, modified the proteins in their wall to prevent the antibiotic from effecting it, adding substances to the active component of antibiotic to inactivate them, creating pumps which quickly flush out antibiotic from the bacteria, undergo mutations to be able to evade antibiotic and so on and so forth. I should quickly add here that there are some bacteria that are able to do all these not only because they have come into contact with the said antibiotic but are either descendants of previously exposed bacteria or copied the resistance from other groups of bacteria by sharing small DNA molecules called plasmids.

As one can clearly see, we are dealing with very sophisticated, highly adaptable and intelligent creatures. However with all these advancement bacteria, they could never have been able to adapt to most antibiotics without the expert help of human beings. Our actions and inactions from state to state agencies to prescribers to pharmacists to consumers. All of us have contributed.

At the level of the state and its agencies resistance have resulted from lack of strict policy on antibiotic stewardship and this include lack of supervision on the preparation, level of active agents in medication, enforcement of laws to prevent over the counter (OTC) purchase. The state should also ensure that our water bodies are protected from industrial waste which contain antibiotics.

Prescribers have to understand that even when the patient asks for it, antibiotic is not used for treating fever, cough and definitely not for abdominal pain unless there is evidence of infection. When antibiotic is started empirically, there should be a conscientious effort to engage a reliable laboratory to examine specimens from patient and if cultures come negative, antibiotic must be stopped immediately.

Prescribers should also arm themselves with the understanding of the pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamics of antibiotics to be able to write appropriate prescription.

Pharmacists should have a zero tolerance for OTC purchases when it comes to antibiotics and other prescribed medications for that matter.

As consumers, many are our sins. Consumers should seek appropriate medical advice on antibiotic usage. They should ensure they complete antibiotic doses as per the exact instructions of the prescriber. When they do not improve, they should go back to the prescriber for reassessment.

We seem to be moving up on the ladder of the antibiotic spectrum and the higher we go, more resistant the bacteria become and the more expensive the antibiotics become. With regards to *S aureus*, we now have resistance for linezolid and daptomycin is being used more frequently. Our baseline antibiotic for treating community acquired pneumonia is amoxicillin/clavulanic acid combination and even that is a shaky ground. There are more multidrug resistant (MDR) strain tuberculosis infection being diagnosed around the world and yes HIV is a key contributor but compliance cannot be left out. . Among gram-negative bacteria, there is a rise in Carbapenemase Resistant Enterobacteriaceae (CRE) in our hospitals and a lot of extended spectrum beta-lactamase (ESBL) producers are coming from the communities. This resistant patterns is being shed across the different bacteria divide. In the western world, some antibiotics which hitherto these times were only given in hospital settings are now prescribed for outpatient use.

To answer my question, I think Ghana is knocking at a very dangerous door with our current situation in respect to antibiotic stewardship and it is not late to do something about it. More resistant strains exist with few to almost no new antibiotic coming. I am not sure what an apocalypse is if we are not fast pacing towards one.

6 Reasons To Have Your **Annual Physical Exam**

By Major Dr Carl Nutsugah

From catching a condition before it turns life-threatening, to keeping you accountable for your health, your annual visit to your primary care doctor is more valuable than you might think. Here are a few reasons that may surprise you:

Prevent future health complications

This is arguably the most important reason to see your doctor every year. Preventative care is proven to increase longevity, as it allows your doctor to track your health and quickly identify any changes or typical activity.

An annual physical exam can provide advance warning of heart disease or cancer. In fact, cardiovascular screening has become a routine part of physical examinations, especially for older adults. At the very least, your doctor can detect symptoms or unhealthy habits and work with you to make adjustments.

Save money

While some other people sometimes avoid the doctor because they don't want to pay for an appointment, if a doctor can nip a problem in the bud before it gets serious, you'll save a lot of money on medical bills down the road.

Establish baselines

Regular physical exams help establish baselines for weight, blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol. These baselines help your physician monitor any progression or improvements in your health problems.



Update vaccinations

Even though you had vaccinations when you were a child, you may need to have some of them updated to make sure that you stay as healthy as possible. Your tetanus is only good for ten years, so it is important to make sure that is up-to-date. You may also need vaccines for Hepatitis B, HPV and much more. Your doctor will be able to go over your options to make sure that you have the protection that you need.

Receive a professional opinion

Very often people are unaware of what is actually going on their bodies. It's easy to go online and search for symptoms, leading to an assumption that you've contracted a rare type of disease or you're suffering from an unusual ailment. But instead of self-diagnosing, it's much wiser to seek medical advice from a medical provider. A physical exam can provide a golden opportunity to receive a sound, well-informed medical diagnosis and treatment advice from an experienced healthcare provider.

Review medications

Reviewing your medications with your physician, including over-the-counter medications, will ensure you are treating your medical problems the best way available and will help prevent possible side effects of medications and possible medication interactions.

Takeaway

Medical costs for check-ups are less expensive than having to undergo treatments that could have been avoided in the first place. So, don't let anxiety or procrastination get in the way of your health and prevent you from living the life you want.

**STOP
THINKING
START
DOING**





LEVERAGING ON MOBILE PHONE TECHNOLOGY TO PROVIDE AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE MENTAL HEALTHCARE IN GHANA; THE MindIT STORY.

Real kindness originates from the heart and it is where passion burns.

In commemoration of World Health Day 2017, I featured an article in my Newspaper column on how to recognize depression in people. I'm a passionate writer and I voluntarily write articles on issues that plague the youth. To me, true kindness is that which is fueled by passion, which is, using what you're passionate about to bless lives. It is one's heart reaching out to that of others.

A teacher from a remote town in Ghana read the piece identified herself as being depressed and so she called me for help. She had a traumatizing time when delivering her child, which she eventually lost and was in a turbulent relationship. I assessed her over the phone and deduced that she was suffering from post partum depression. I tried to get her some mental healthcare form where she was but there was no psychiatrist close to her. She didn't know she was depressed, she didn't know there was treatment available and she didn't know where she could get the help from. She was importunate with her requests but unfortunately, I lost her number and didn't hear from her again

This marked a turning point in my life! It dawned on me that there may be some people who may be suffering the same predicament as her and so I thought of a way to screen the Ghanaian population for mental illness and offer them care which is affordable and closest to them,. I didn't have enough money so I convened an eclectic team of skilled youth who'd contribute their skills pro bono to run the service. It was a move that required them to offer their time and expertise for free. The team included an animator, my fellow medical students and a clinical psychology intern. Now, after a year, we run a service which uses innovative IT tools to screen the Ghanaian population for mental illness and provide them with affordable care. Our screening short code, *713*66# is free nationwide on all networks in Ghana, doesn't require mobile data and works on the most unsophisticated phone. We have a call center (which runs on volunteerism) which receives the user responses, assesses them and facilitates a free clinical consultation for them at the nearest mental health unit, under Ghana's pervasive National Health Insurance Programme. After its launch in October 2017, MindIT Service has received immense recognition both locally and internationally.



CHOOSE
LIFE:



Many Ghanaians are living with undiagnosed mental illness. According to a situational analysis by WHO, it is estimated that of the 21.6 million people living in Ghana, 650,000 are suffering from a severe mental disorder and a further 2,166,000 are suffering from a moderate to mild mental disorder. The treatment gap is 98% of the total population expected to have a mental disorder. In addition, there are only 22 psychiatrists, and the presence of only 32 psychiatrists to serve the entire population of Ghana. The major problems of mental healthcare in Ghana are (i) inaccessibility of mental healthcare facilities, (ii) inadequate psychiatrists, (iii) stigma, (iv) ignorance about mental health and the (v) high cost of seeing a psychiatrist/psychologist. There is the need to work towards improving the treatment gap of 98% of the entire population expected to have a mental disorder.

Our service, MindIT Mental Health Service is an initiative, which uses innovative IT tools to screen Ghana's population for mental illness and provides them access affordable and accessible care, and we leverage on already established healthcare systems in the country for this purpose. The major problems of mental healthcare in Ghana are (i) inaccessibility of mental healthcare facilities, (ii) inadequate psychiatrists, (iii) stigma, (iv) ignorance about mental health and the (v) high cost of seeing a psychiatrist/psychologist.

With regards to inadequate psychiatrists, the Ghana Health Service augmented this by giving community nurses some training in mental healthcare so they could diagnose mental illnesses and prescribe medication. Even though the Ghana Health Service has introduced this intervention, many people are still unaware of their services hence my service works to screen the community free of charge and link people to the units which are closest to them for free consultations under the country's prevalent National Health Insurance Scheme.

The nurses have been stationed in all districts of the country and are over 500, hence augment the services of the 18 psychiatrists. Unlike the mainstream psychiatric hospitals in the country which do not accept the National Health Insurance Card, these community psychiatric units accept the insurance card which is very prevalent in Ghana and they provide free consultations for mentally ill patients. The first tool which is used to screen the population is a USSD, colloquially known as a short code. It is free on all networks in Ghana and has a screening tool incorporated in it. It is *713*66#. The screening tool comprises the common symptoms of Depressive Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder and Psychotic Disorders.

When users dial the USSD, they follow the text prompt and answer the four (4) questions, which are contained in the questionnaire. Their telephone numbers and responses are automatically forwarded to our call center via an instant text message, which is also recorded on our Electronic Health Records System. Our call center operators call to screen them further and connect them to the community psychiatric unit, which is closest to them for management.

The use of the code is absolutely free and users are contacted and directed to the community psychiatry unit that's closest to them for free consultations and subsidized medication under the National Health Insurance Scheme. This solves the problem of accessibility as the users would be directed to the units closest to them hence they won't have to travel to the big cities to seek care from the psychiatrists who are only eighteen. This also addresses the problem of high cost of psychiatric fees as users are provided free consultations under the country's National Health insurance scheme.

Presently, the management team of MindIT comprises five (5) youth who use provide their services pro bono. In essence, we screen the population free of charge, and offer them affordable community-centered care.

We have received a little over two thousand user responses since we began the service. The code is operational countrywide and doesn't need airtime or mobile data to work, thus those without smart phones can use it.

We have developed an electronic health record tool which automatically receives user responses and serves as a database for user health records.. Essentially, we use the mobile phone handset to provide affordable and accessible mental healthcare at absolutely no cost to the user. This is novel and with the similar barriers to mental healthcare in other Sub Saharan African countries as well as the presence of community psychiatry units, this service can be extended to other countries in Africa..

Random acts of kindness change the world, one person at a time. An act of educating the public on Depression culminated in the creation of a mental health service.

Our hearts contain immeasurable bits which we can share with others, and anytime their hearts beat, we feel a nudge on ours too. That motivates us to do more. When you lose a piece of yourself to people, you multiply and see yourself in that person. Together we can change the world, just one act of kindness at a time.

Today, we have been successful in screening over two thousand Ghanaians for mental health disorders and provided a good number of them with affordable and accessible mental healthcare. The service has been profiled by BBC Focus on Africa, been a finalist at FAIMER Students Project for Health Competition in Limerick Ireland, as well as a finalist in the 2018 World Bank Social Inclusion Heroes Competition.

MindIT Mental Health Service

Ghana has a high prevalence of mental illness, and this is compounded by the presence of only about **18 psychiatrists** who serve the entire population of about **27 million people**.

MindIT is a service which uses innovative IT interventions to help people get access to affordable mental healthcare.

HOW OUR INITIATIVE WORKS

A distressed user dials our toll free USSD *713*66# and is presented with four YES/NO questions that screen for Depression, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Psychotic Disorder and Suicidal Ideation.

After completing the questions session, the users telephone number and responses are instantly forwarded via an instant text message to mindIT's call centre.

Our call centre follows up on the distressed user through a call and arranges for the user to get care at a community psychiatry unit closest to him or her.

The community psychiatric units have trained personnel who provide mental healthcare.



**EXPERIENCING
ANY OF
THESE?**



Unexplained and excessive worry
and fear which interferes
with your daily activities?

Extreme sadness and loss of interest
in things you once enjoyed?

Thoughts of worthlessness, hopelessness
or ending your life by suicide?

Hearing or seeing things
which don't exist?

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5

Common *Oral Habits* in Ghana we need to break

By Capt Dr Akuamoah-Boateng

It is a good habit to visit your dentist regularly. These visits however must not be a painful or difficult one. To help you avoid visiting a dentist on a bad foot, here are some bad oral hygiene habits you need to break now.

1. Irregular Flossing & Brushing

Irregular flossing and brushing can lead to many dental issues. If you skip regular hygiene routines you can expect some backlash from your mouth. You are most likely to experience bad breath, bleeding, swollen gums, and cavities. If you get a cavity and don't treat it, they can damage the nervous system of the tooth and cause you a lot of pain. You may even require root canals or extractions if the cavity gets large enough.

So make sure to always brush twice a day and floss at least once a day to maintain a healthy mouth.

2. Smoking

Smoking is a bad habit that can lead to many oral health problems. Smoking not only affects your teeth and gums but it can also lead to life-threatening mouth conditions such as oral cancer.

So whether you've been a smoker for 6 months or 5 years, quitting will certainly decrease the risk of developing oral cancer, heart disease, lung cancer, and other serious conditions. The use of tobacco is also a common reason for stained and yellow teeth.

3. Brushing Too Aggressively

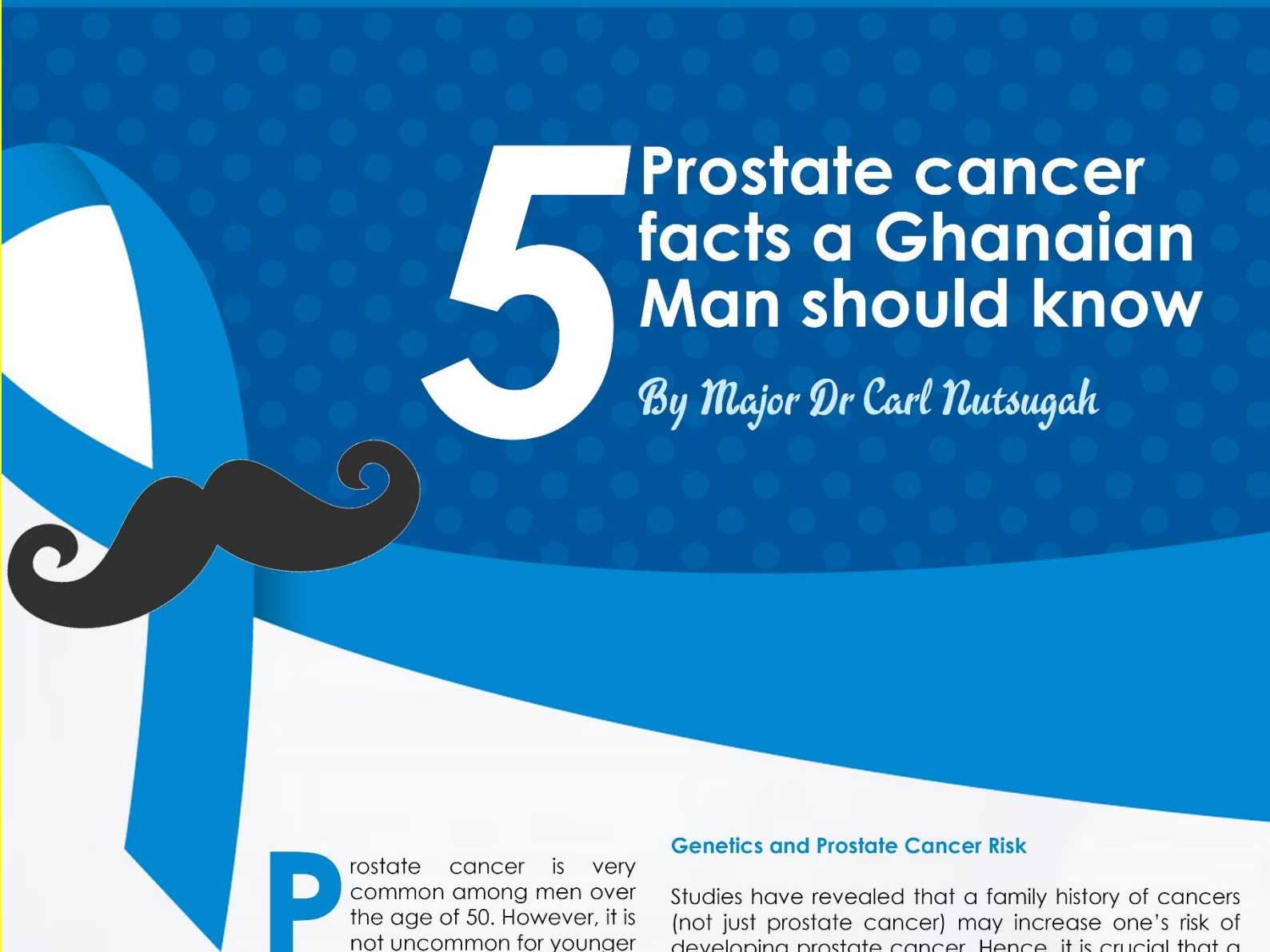
Brushing your teeth too aggressively can cause damage to your teeth and gums. If you are brushing too hard, you can actually cause your gums to recede and your tooth structure to wear down. If your toothbrush bristles are splayed and fan out over time, that is a sign you are brushing too hard.

4. Biting or chewing on objects

If it isn't food or drink, chances are, it doesn't belong in your mouth. Chewing on clothing, pens, pencils and other foreign objects can cause chips, fractures and damage to your tooth enamel and existing dental restorations. This can also cause trauma or injury to your teeth and gums.

5. Drinking sugary acidic drinks

Drinking sugary drinks is one of the leading causes of tooth decay. Your mouth is naturally non acidic. If you introduce and constantly attack your teeth with sugars and acids from sugary acidic drinks, your mouth's pH level will become more acidic. When your mouth is more acidic, cavity causing bacteria will attack the teeth causing tooth decay. Acidic drinks can not only cause tooth decay but can cause tooth erosion as well.



5 Prostate cancer facts a Ghanaian Man should know

By Major Dr Carl Nutsugah

Prostate cancer is very common among men over the age of 50. However, it is not uncommon for younger men to get it.

Hence, it is crucial to keep tabs on one's symptoms and a check with a doctor can help prevent dangerous situations.

Diet Change and Prostate Cancer Risk

Men must focus on maintaining a healthy diet to be able to reduce the risk of developing prostate cancer. Medical experts usually recommend a diet rich in fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, low-fat dairy, and non-meat protein sources. Nuts and beans are great alternatives to meat protein sources. Reducing the intake of added sugars and refined grains is also important. Although a diet change may not have a magical effect on the disease and its risk, the practice will keep men healthy and lower the risk.

Annual PSA Testing

Most men do not need a yearly PSA testing. This is a blood test for prostate-specific antigen, a protein produced in the prostate. Presence of this protein in high levels signals the presence of cancer. In the year 2012, a recommendation was issued by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force against routine PSA-based screening for prostate cancer in men. This was mainly applicable on men without the disease. According to the Task Force, the risks of screening were greater than the benefits. In some cases, high false-positive rates of the test and the harms of being treated for a prostate tumor that grows very slow may be fatal.

Genetics and Prostate Cancer Risk

Studies have revealed that a family history of cancers (not just prostate cancer) may increase one's risk of developing prostate cancer. Hence, it is crucial that a man with a family history of cancer talks to his doctor in order to know if special screenings are required. A new diagnosis of cancer in the family should prompt you to speak to your doctor without delay.

Biopsies During Prostate Cancer Surveillance

Most patients want to know if they really require biopsies. Presently, biopsies are standard of care. When patients are under active surveillance, doctors use regular biopsies. This is important for checking the progress of prostate tumors. When the doctor finds any progress in tumor, the patient is asked to begin treatment. In case the tumor is stable, the patient stays on surveillance. This approach protects men from side effects of treatment.

Balancing Side Effects from Prostate Cancer

These days, men have a number of treatment options including robotic surgery for prostate cancer. This treatment has less pain and side effects. It is also known for faster recovery. It is important to have a detailed discussion with the doctor about side effects of treatment beforehand. Most importantly, the patient must follow the care instructions following a surgery. Doctors usually help patients choose a specific course of treatment based on their condition. They also offer special tips and instructions on managing post-treatment symptoms to make the journey to recovery easier and faster.

INTERVIEW

QUESTIONS FOR KAYANG

1. Let's talk about you. Who's Kayang and how did she fall into fitness.

I am a student of life, love to meet new people and learn new things. I read a lot and I'm a traveler at heart. I am an entrepreneur, a human settlement planner and a model. Although an active child, my formal exposure to exercising started however in high school, have been off and on since then until in December 2017, when I resolved to, no excuses, no days off exercise for the rest of my life. It's been amazing the impact it has had on my life and others.

2. Do you have fitness goals for yourself? If so, what are they?

Yes, I do. Mainly to be healthy. Before my resolution I was out of breath often, a bit stiff, so I needed to stretch and get my heart pumping. Although I concentrate on some areas such as abs and squats, my main goal is to be healthy, maintain body stature, and still be fit (young) when old.

3. What was your first experience like lifting a weight?

I didn't start lifting weights until almost a year into my fitness journey. When I first did, it felt great because I could feel the difference. Don't get me wrong, it did sting after first few reps. I however was excited because I could appreciate the effectiveness it brought. Also, you get used to them.

4. Do you think fitness training have become popular among Ghanaians?

Compared to previous years, I would say yes. It could also be because I am in the field, I come across more people interested in fitness. It remains however that most Ghanaians are interested in it, and that's just about it. To make the resolve, to break sweat often, go through the pain, and will yourself back at it, to get the shape desired and most importantly stay healthy is discouraging in itself to most. I should know, I've been there before.

5.What type of training did you have to do when you fell into fitness

Just the basics, sit ups, planks, squats, jumping jacks, jogging and a bit of basic yoga for flexibility. I started small, I started simple, and groomed myself as I added on and intensified. I started with a 5mins workout and now have at least 30mins workout plan. It's not about how little you do, but how consistently you do it. That's the key.

6.What are the peculiar challenges you face as a woman in the fitness industry

I exercise mostly at home so I'm in much control of what I do. Aside comments like "a lady too with packs", which can affect your body image, if you're not strong willed you may give up. I believe determination trumps every challenge.

7.What are the special needs you think women in Ghana should consider when it comes to fitness.

Whilst it is a male dominated industry with women now joining in increasingly, I think we both have the same goals for being here; to get and stay fit, be healthy and for some to impact others. Wearing the appropriate outfit is necessary, aside that, what matters most is having the right state of mind, having a no quitting attitude and staying the course.

8.What measures would you and other fitness enthusiasts in the country take to increase the number of females going into fitness.

Education for the start. They need to be aware and accept that fitness is not just something you do for fun; it is vital for our existence. Even manmade machines need maintenance from time to time to function, and they are replaceable. The body you were born with is all you've got in life. Keeping fit is the maintenance your body needs to be in utmost function. Also, the collaboration of female fitness enthusiasts to put out content and spearhead the awareness for the need for exercise sends a strong message of empowerment and a strong image of the possibilities that fitness has to offer women. Women need to know they can, and they will.



9. Tell me about your specialties in terms of fitness and exercise?

If I have a specialty it would be that every single day of the year, I'd exercise. If I see a new exercise and think I should incorporate it, I will. I do visit the gym sometimes, but exercise mostly at home, with basic tools. So you'd be sure that wherever I am at any given day, I'd exercise.

10. What should someone do if they are really interested in becoming fit?

Start. And accept no excuses, most especially from yourself. I wouldn't ask you register a gym membership immediately, because then the gym becomes the only thing making you exercise, or not. If you can psych yourself to exercise even 5mins a day, then you get a gym membership for direction and intensity. The days you don't go to the gym, you'd still exercise. That's how you maintain fitness

11. How important is nutrition and dieting to anyone aspiring to get into fitness?

It plays a major role. Not only does your body need ample nutrition to get you through exercises, Dieting and nutrition is a deciding factor of your results. Most often, our current diet has a direct relation with our current state. Take a scale for example, on one end is exercise, the other is diet. They have to go hand in hand for you to be balanced.

12. What are some of the misconceptions people have about exercising and getting in shape?

I have had people tell me I'll be stiff if I exercise, it's the opposite. Others do few weeks and think it's not working because they've not seen results. Expecting to lose in a few weeks what has been gained in years. Results take time. No short cuts. Some think when they stop things would worsen than before. They miss the fact that they would be better exercising. Hence, they don't start. Getting in shape is seen abstract, tiring and impossible. It is actually simple should you start small. Give yourself time to adjust.

13. What can you offer individuals who want to train and remain fit?

I'd be a daily reminder that starting really is in your head and that's all you really need. They should start even if 5 sit ups a day and take it from there. I am available to share my experiences but that's how far I can go. No matter what I say, if they don't put it to practice, it's as good as nothing.

14. Are there any drawbacks to working in this field?

When I started, I had a lot of discouragement from people who tried to put doubt in me. And when that didn't succeed the results I had were seen as misplaced. Funny thing is they come from people not in the field. Nothing however has drawn me back. My resolve still stands.

15. How has your job changed your life?

I have had a sense of fulfillment in every day since I started. Even if a day doesn't go well, I achieved one thing; I exercised. I have had renewed energy; it gets my heart pumping. The thought process during exercise is terrific, it's a kind of meditation; many ideas are formed and solutions found during exercise time. It has inspired others to exercise, and that has been an honor.

16. Something for fun: What is your favorite healthy snack?

I don't have a favorite, perhaps a salad, fruit juice or a smoothie

17. Would you push your boyfriend/husband to exercise even if he's not really into that?

Would I take him to the hospital when sick? Yes. Would I insist he eats when hungry? Absolutely. I see exercise as food or water. Exercise is good for me, would be good for him too. The purpose of a flame is to kindle others. I am a flame.

THANK YOU.

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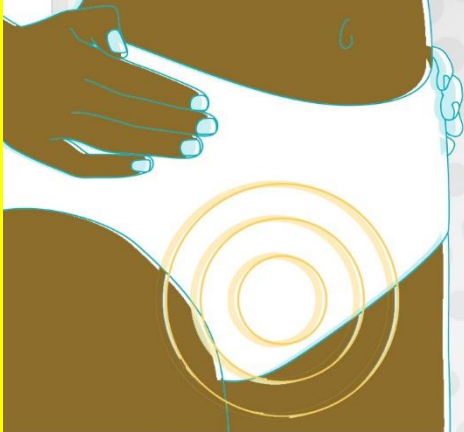
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VAGINAL DISCHARGE BLOGSPOT

Meet Akosua! She is a 21 year old lady

and even though she has had sex a couple of times before, she is currently not sexually active.

Akosua has always had a discharge 'problem'. Even before she had sex, she used to notice her panties stained with a clear – sometimes whitish – fluid. This discharge happens so randomly and needless to say, it is a cause of serious embarrassment to her. The discharge does have a smell to it, and though not fishy, nor a disgusting smell, it's a smell. A smell she tries so hard for no one to notice. When she started birth control, the discharge reduced a bit but picked up again when her mum recently took her off the pills.

Perhaps reader, you identify with Akosua. Or maybe you identify more with Yaa, who has noticed that during sexual intercourse with her partner, there is this foul-smelling fishy odour that emanates.

The questions to ask? What is normal vaginal discharge and what is not? And is every abnormal vaginal discharge really candidiasis as most of us think? Let's find out.

What is Vaginal Discharge?

Vaginal discharge is fluid released by the glands in the vagina and cervix. This fluid plays a vital housekeeping role in the female reproductive system. It carries dead cells (pus) and bacteria out of the body. This keeps the vagina clean and helps prevent infection.

More often than not, vaginal discharge is perfectly normal (as seen in Akosua's story). Normal vaginal discharge changes in response to the changing hormonal levels during the menstrual cycle. The discharge varies in amount and odour and ranges from clear to milky-white in colour. It may however turn slightly yellow on oxidation and hence tends to leave yellow stains in your underwear.

Just around ovulation, the normal vaginal discharge is white, very stretchy and abundant and is usually likened to 'egg white'. Aside ovulation, quantity may also increase when you are breastfeeding or sexually aroused. It may also smell different when you are pregnant.

None of those changes is cause for alarm. However, if the colour, smell, or consistency seems quite different than usual, especially if you also have vaginal itching or burning, you could be dealing with an infection or other condition.

The pH of the vagina is usually between 3.5 and 4.5, with lactobacilli being the most common organisms found in the vagina. This however differs in menopausal women, who have a vaginal pH of about 7.0, due to the reduced influence of oestrogen. An imbalance in the pH may predispose one to an infection.

Abnormal vaginal discharge

Candidiasis (Vulvovaginal candidiasis)

Yeast infection is one of the most common genital infections. 3 out of 4 women get yeast infection at some point in their lifetime. Symptoms of candidiasis include:

- Vulval itching and soreness
- Redness and swelling
- Thick, cheese-like discharge
- Burning during urination or sex
- Pain during sexual intercourse (Dyspareunia)

Candidiasis is more common in states where your body has reduced immunity (pregnancy, diabetes mellitus, people on steroids, and HIV infected women) and also people on repeated courses of broad-spectrum antibiotics.

It may be uncomplicated, complicated or recurrent and treatment depends on which of them it is (See your gynaecologist for more information and also for treatment if you are experiencing any of these symptoms).

To prevent catching a yeast infection, try these tips:

- Don't douche (avoid the use of soaps and perfumes in and around the vagina and vulva)
- Change your pads (and tampons) frequently
- Ditch synthetic underwear in favour of cotton underwear and wear loose clothes
- Wipe from front to back after visiting the washroom
- Change out of wet and damp clothes ASAP
- Skip the hot tubs and bubble baths

Trichomonas Vaginalis/ trichomoniasis

Trichomonas vaginalis is a sexually transmitted and usually recurs if your partner is not treated simultaneously. Most men and many women with trichomoniasis don't show any symptoms. But if you or one of your sex partners has it, it's important for all of you to get treatment. Having trichomoniasis can make it feel unpleasant to have sex. Without treatment, the infection can last for months or even years. Trichomoniasis also raises the chances that you could get or spread other STDs including HIV. Symptoms to look out for include:

- Foul smelling vaginal discharge; yellowish green in nature
- Painful urination
- Itching, burning, redness or soreness of the genitals

As with all sexually transmitted conditions, the best way to prevent trichomoniasis is to make sure your partner wears a condom or to wear one yourself.

Gonorrhoea

Gonorrhoea is caused by the bacteria *Neisseria gonorrhoea*. It is also a sexually transmitted disease which is usually without any symptoms in women. Some symptoms however are:

- Painful urination with pus-like discharge from the urethra (tube that carries urine out of the body) or vaginal discharge
- Lower abdominal pain and
- Intermenstrual bleeding (bleeding in-between your periods)

Chlamydia

Just like gonorrhoea, chlamydia is also sexually transmitted and usually shows no symptoms . It also however has some symptoms which include:

- Pus-like vaginal discharge
- Bleeding after sex and
- Painful urination

Bacterial vaginosis

Bacterial vaginosis gives off a fishy, malodorous discharge which is more prominent during and following menstruations. The discharge is usually thin, grey, white or green. Most women with bacterial vaginosis have no signs or symptoms. You are at a higher risk of acquiring bacterial vaginosis if you:

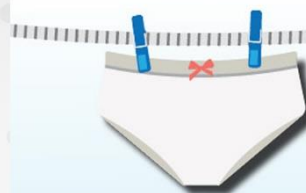
- Have multiple sexual partners or a new sexual partner
- Douche

Well folks! This is a little summary of the different types of abnormal vaginal discharge. This list is by no means exhaustive and should you experience any of the symptoms described above, consult a physician.

Check the infographic on the types of vaginal discharge to help you know what that stain in your panty is telling you.

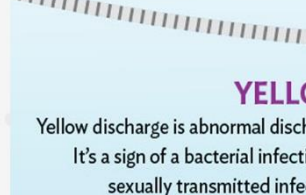
5 Types of Vaginal Discharge & What They Mean

Vaginal discharge raises common questions for women, including what's normal and what's not.



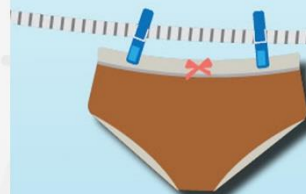
THICK, WHITE

Thick, white discharge represents normal discharge. If you have other symptoms, such as itching, burning and irritation, it's probably a yeast infection.



YELLOW

Yellow discharge is abnormal discharge. It's a sign of a bacterial infection or sexually transmitted infection.



BROWN

Brown discharge may be caused by irregular period cycles. If brown discharge keeps appearing this could be a sign of uterine or cervical cancer.



GREEN

Green discharge is not normal. It's a sign of bacterial infection or sexually transmitted infection.



YEAST INFECTION

Symptoms of yeast infection discharge include a thick, white, cottage cheese-like discharge, along with itching, redness, irritation and burning.

If you have any questions about vaginal discharge, contact your provider.



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