



Closer Look at Discharges: What's Normal and What's Not

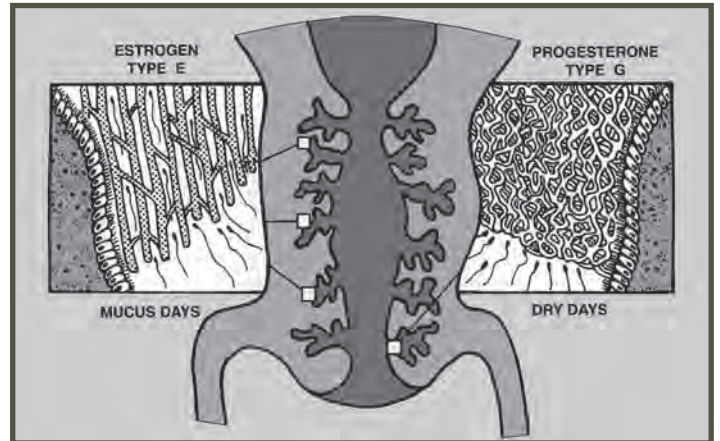
By : Teresa Kenney, APRN, CFCMC

Most young girls as they mature into young women do not pay much attention to the most important indicator of their natural fertility. This is a vaginal discharge that is referred to as "cervical mucus." It may sound gross but, in reality, cervical mucus is essential for a married couple to achieve a pregnancy. In order for pregnancy to occur, you need three vital things: an egg (supplied by the female), a sperm (supplied by the male), and cervical mucus (supplied again by the female).

Cervical mucus can also be referred to as a biological marker. It is produced by the endocervical cells inside the cervix (see picture of cervical crypts, right). It allows a woman to determine each day whether she is fertile or infertile. In fact, some methods of natural family planning are based solely on determining the presence of cervical mucus on a daily basis.

to understand their health and couples to know whether they can achieve a pregnancy on each day of the menstrual cycle. How amazing it is that God has built into our own bodies the knowledge and tools that we need to plan families as married couples while (BONUS!) keeping marriages open to LIFE and LOVE throughout the entire married life!

So, how can you tell when you are producing this normal vaginal discharge called cervical mucus? It is easy! When you go to the bathroom and wipe from front to back with the toilet tissue, you will feel a sensation. It may feel dry, ... *Continued on page 2*



Cervical crypts in the cervix and the different types of mucus produced under hormonal influence.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Closer Look at Discharges: What's Normal & What's Not 1
- More Fashionable Than Clothes 3
- "Nature with its varied charms..." 3
- SNAPSHOT: Saint Gemma Galgani 4
- Modesty Tips 4
- Resources 4

Dr. Thomas Hilgers at the Pope Paul VI Institute developed a system of fertility care called the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System. It is a mucus-only system that allows single women

DID YOU KNOW????

Modesty, which means freedom from conceit or vanity and means propriety in dress, speech, or conduct, "comes from the Latin *modestus*, which literally translates as 'keeping due measure.' Knowing the correct measure of yourself is modesty, and when someone praises you too much, your modesty might kick in and make you want to tell them to be quiet. Modesty also means you keep things decent and not too outrageous, like wearing clothes that hide your skin, or painting your walls beige instead of covering them with glow-in-the-dark diamond wallpaper." (Taken from www.m-w.com and from www.vocabulary.com)

Here and on the back page are some great resources for creating your own style...while being stylishly modest!
www.clothedmuch.com A great blog with helpful guides on how to alter a cute top or skirt to make it modest.
www.fashionbell.com/modest-fashion-blog-reviews Lists and reviews several great blogs and websites dedicated to modest yet trendy clothing.
modestisthehottestfashionshow.com Find an actual fashion show in your area that features modest clothing.
Verily (www.verilymag.com) & **Eliza** (www.elizamagazine.com) Two great women's fashion/interest magazines.

A newsletter dedicated to helping young women

Closer Look at Discharges ...continued

Continued from page 1

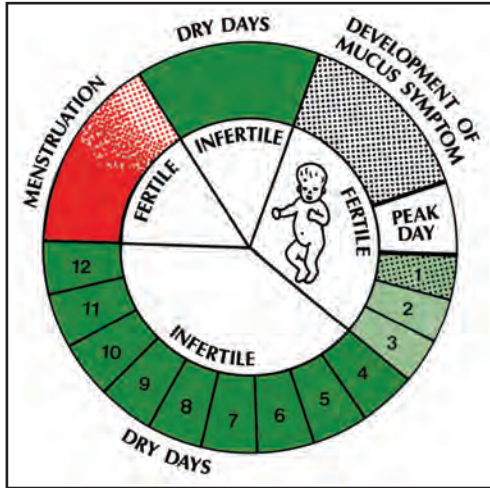
...smooth, damp, or even slippery. These sensations are created based on whether cervical mucus is present or not.

When cervical mucus discharge is present on the tissue, it may have a different look based on where you are in your menstrual cycle. When you are infertile or not ovulating, your estrogen levels are low and you will not produce cervical mucus. As ovulation approaches, the estrogen levels rise. Estrogen stimulates the cervix to produce a mucus discharge that starts out as cloudy and becomes crystal clear and very stretchy, mucus that is referred to as Peak-type mucus. After ovulation, the woman stops seeing this discharge until her menses starts. Every woman is different in how much mucus she creates. Some women might produce this mucus for a couple days while other women may produce it for five days or more.

When you are young and not married, it is good to pay attention to the days you have discharge and be aware of what it is telling you about your body. When peak-type mucus is being produced,

an egg is being released from the ovary—an event called ovulation. For single women, this event will end with you having a menses or period within 10-14 days.

So now you know what normal vaginal discharge is, but what is abnormal discharge? Abnormal vaginal discharge will have a different physical consistency, color, and sometimes odor. An *abnormal* chronic discharge (*chronic* means produced on a daily basis) may have an unusual color, like bright yellow or green or gray. Or, an *abnormal* chronic discharge may be very profuse or watery and/or may have unusual smell like a fishy odor or strange odor. This type of discharge may also cause vaginal symptoms like itching, burning, or mild to strong irritation.



This is an example of a fertility wheel—the concept behind Creighton Model charting—that shows the days when mucus is and is not observed. The white baby refers to mucus days and generally tells the women she is fertile during that time. The green days are days when she is dry or no mucus is observed, and the red days are for the days of the menses.

Abnormal discharge may be caused by a vaginal infection. The two most common types are yeast infections and bacterial infections. These can result from any disturbance in the natural environment of the vagina. Some causes of these infections are oral antibiotic use, using scented products (bathing or laundry), having certain health conditions like diabetes or autoimmune disease, or being sexually active. Women who are sexually active before marriage and have multiple partners are also at risk for abnormal vaginal discharge from sexually transmitted diseases, like gonorrhea, chlamydia, trichomoniasis, and pelvic inflammatory disease. These infections not only cause abnormal discharge but can be damaging to your future fertility. You can protect yourself from these infections by abstinence from sex or genital activity until marriage. You can prevent other vaginal infections by using good vaginal hygiene including using unscented soaps, laundry products, and feminine hygiene products; wearing cotton underwear; avoiding antibacterial soaps in the vaginal area; and always wiping from front to back to avoid contamination in the vagina. If you suspect you have abnormal vaginal discharge you need to see your doctor to be evaluated and treated appropriately.

The most important thing to learn about vaginal discharge is that it is something to which you should pay attention. Whether it is indicating to us the beautiful gift of our fertility or telling us something might be wrong, it is a part of the way God created us. So, start noticing what your body is telling you! Learning how to chart this biological marker using the Creighton Model System can give you insight into your health and can give you great confidence in planning your family and blessings to your marriage. To learn more, go to www.fertilitycare.org or call the Pope Paul VI Institute FertilityCare™ Center at 402-390-0842.

And of what should we be afraid?
Our captain on this battlefield is Christ Jesus.
We have discovered what we have to do.
Christ has bound our enemies for us and weakened them that they cannot overcome us unless we so choose to let them.
— St. Catherine of Siena

More Fashionable than Clothes...

By: Jena McFadden, BS, FCP

How beautiful,
then,
is modesty,
and what a gem
among virtues
it is.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux

Style must
never be
a
proximate
occasion
of sin.

— Pope Pius XII

What word immediately pops into your mind when you think of modesty?

Ready, set, go! That's right...Clothes. Clothes that cover the body or not enough clothes to cover the body.

Modesty is usually a topic associated with how we dress and express ourselves externally, but there is a deeper component to this subject that is sometimes missed. What is that deeper component I speak of?

Our hearts and minds! Modesty originates in the heart and the head. Like all virtues, modesty comes from the work of the Spirit in and through our lives. It begins inside of us but, then, is manifested on the outside. In the Bible, 1 Peter 3:3-4 says, "Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious" (ESV).

Girls, do you hear what he is saying?! He isn't saying that making your hair look nice and presentable or wearing that pair of 14-karat gold earrings you got for your birthday are a negative thing. But, more importantly, he emphasizes the imperishable beauty that is so very precious is the sight of God.

That imperishable beauty comes from knowledge of oneself through the "lens of love," the "lens of God." As we continue to commit ourselves to the love of Jesus Christ through prayer, the Mass, Adoration, gift of self and relationship with Mary, we can grow in greater understanding of who we are made to be as women in the light of God. This imperishable beauty cannot be bought for 20% off during the annual summer sale. It is freely given at full retail value when we submit our lives to God. It is through the gift of one self to God, that we will truly learn who we are and then offer our "feminine genius" to the world. This virtue of modesty should be displayed through our clothes, speech, hair, nails, jewelry, et cetera.

Knowing we are daughters of God the Father and receiving His love for us will radiate from the inside out and will draw far more attention than the latest buy from American Eagle or Forever 21. "That you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world." Philippians 2:15 (ESV)

Jena McFadden is an Education Program Assistant at the Pope Paul VI Institute. She is a FertilityCare Practitioner, holds a bachelor degree in biology, and is currently in a BSN program.



Nature with its varied charms exerted a powerful spell over me; dusk settling down over the landscape, moonlight shimmering on the water, flowers, the forest, the river, butterflies all enraptured me. The warm caressing breath of the wind, the whispered murmur of the leaves, the deep silence of the night, the aspect of the stars ravished my soul. This reverie, all unknown to me, was a sort of pious meditation, which was to deepen and become a real contemplation rendering me speechless, and inflaming me with gratitude and love for the Infinite God and consuming me with the desire to possess the unique, ideal Beauty.

—Blessed Dina Belanger (From: Autobiography of Dina Belanger, Canada: Religious of Jesus and Mary, 1984 edition)

Images courtesy of Microsoft Office
clipart online, 2012 (images from
Microsoft partner: Fotolia)



Resources

www.popepaulvi.com

www.DrHilgers.com

www.fertilitycare.org

<http://www.chastity.com>

<http://vocation-network.org>

www.onemoresoul.com

www.ewtn.com

SNAPSHOT: Saint Gemma Galgani



St. Gemma Galgani

*"But to come to heaven requires purity of heart:
give it to me, my Jesus....*

Yes, I so desire purity of heart!"

– St Gemma Galgani

St. Gemma Galgani, born 12 March 1878 at Borgo Nuovo di Camigliano, Lucca, Tuscany, Italy, was the eldest daughter of a poor pharmacist. Her mother died when Gemma was seven, and her father died when the girl was eighteen. She took over the care of her seven brothers and sisters. Her health was always poor, and between that and her home life she never finished school.

Gemma was cured in her 20's of spinal meningitis by prayers to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Saint Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows, and Saint Marguerite Marie Alacoque. She was rejected by the religious orders to which she applied as they were concerned about her health; they would not believe her cure and were suspicious of the claims of a miracle.

She became a Passionist tertiary. Gemma was a stigmatist, receiving the wounds on her hands and feet each Thursday evening through Friday afternoon starting in June 1899 and continuing into 1901. Also a visionary, she saw her guardian angel daily and had visits from Jesus, Mary, Saint Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows, and the devil who tempted her to spit on the cross and break a rosary.

Gemma died on Holy Saturday, 11 April 1903 at Borgo Nuovo di Camigliano, Lucca, Italy of tuberculosis. She was canonized 2 May 1940 by Pope Pius XII. Venerable Germanus Ruoppolo was her spiritual director and wrote her biography. She is patroness against temptations; against the death of parents; against tuberculosis; of apothecaries, druggists, and pharmacists; and of students.

Adapted from: "Saint Gemma Galgani". Saints.SQPN.com. 9 August 2010. Web. [10 September 2012]. <<http://saints.sqpn.com/saint-gemma-galgani/>>

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"

– Matthew 5:8

Modesty Tips by Shelley Hitz

A few of my modesty tips... These are only tips and not rules. But, they can get you started in the right direction.

So let's do a quick modesty check from head to toe using a few of my modesty tips.

Is the neckline of my shirt too low? *Note* I try to make sure I can put my palm between the top of my bra and the top of my neckline. *Solution:* Wear a tank top underneath your shirt.

When I lean over, does my shirt gap? *Solution:* Use double-sided tape to hold your neckline in place or wear a tank top underneath your shirt.

Are my bra straps showing? *Solution:* Pin your straps in place or layer another shirt over top.

Is my shirt too tight? *Solution:* Layer another shirt or jacket over top. Sometimes I buy a bigger size.

Does my belly show when I lift my hands above my head? *Solution:* Wear a tank top underneath your shirt.

Can you see my underwear when I lean over? *Solution:* Wear a tank top underneath your shirt.

Are my pants or skirt too tight? Does my panty line show through? *Solution:* Wear a longer shirt untucked that covers your butt or wear looser pants and skirts.

Is my skirt or shorts too short? *Note* Sit down and look in front of a mirror to check. *Solution:* Wear board shorts or capris or long skirts.

Don't forget swimwear... Check out my website for my advice on swimwear – www.findyourtruebeauty.com

By Shelley Hitz, author of *Mirror, Mirror*, a guide to finding your true beauty and modesty. (www.shelleyhitz.com). Reprinted with permission.

Pope Paul VI Institute

For the Study of Human Reproduction
6901 Mercy Road • Omaha, NE 68106-2621
(402) 390-6600 • www.popepaulvi.com
Comments/questions: popepaul@popepaulvi.com