

# Vaginal Atrophy

Vaginal atrophy is the thinning, drying, and pain of the vaginal walls. This is due to lower estrogen levels in the body. Less estrogen makes your vaginal tissues less flexible. It also makes the tissues more fragile. Vaginal atrophy can happen after menopause. It can also develop during breastfeeding or with long-term use of some birth control. Use this handout to learn more about the symptoms and treatments that are available.

## Symptoms

- Vaginal dryness
- Vaginal burning
- Vaginal discharge
- Genital itching
- Burning with urination
- Overwhelming need to urinate
- More frequent urinary tract infections (UTI)
- Urinary incontinence
- Light bleeding with sex
- Pain with sex
- Decreased vaginal lubrication during sex
- Shortening and tightening of vaginal wall

## Treatment

- Vaginal moisturizer
  - » Restores moisture to the vagina
- Lubricant
  - » Decreases discomfort during sex
- Topical estrogen
  - » Restores normal hormone level to decrease skin irritability
- Pelvic health physical therapy
  - » Improves blood flow to tissues
  - » Increases flexibility of the vagina
- Pain-free sex (with or without a partner)
  - » Increases blood flow to improve tissue health

