Cervicitis

Cervicitis is an inflammation of the cervix. The cervix is the bottom part of the womb that protrudes into the top of the vagina. Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are the most common cause of cervicitis. This hand out focuses on STIs as the causes of cervicitis.

SYMPTOMS

- Most often there are no apparent problems or symptoms.
- Abnormal vaginal discharge (bad odor, grey or yellow in color).
- Pain or itching of the area outside the vagina (*vulva*).
- Painful intercourse.
- Frequent urination.
- Bleeding between menstrual periods, after intercourse o after menopause.
- Lower abdominal or low back pain, especially during intercourse.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- No sexual activity for 7 days after starting treatment.
- No sexual activity until the partner has been treated.
- Take all antibiotics for the full length of time.
- All sexual partners should be examined and be treated. Make sure all partners are informed so this can be done.
- **Do not** have sexual contact until your infection has been fully treated. **Do not** have sexual contact until your caregiver has given an OK to resume a physical relationship.

The diagnosis of cervicitis often requires a pelvic exam and taking tissue specimens or cultures from inside the cervix. A PAP smear is done to screen for cervical cancer.

- The first PAP smear should be done at age 21.
- **Between ages 21 and 29**, **PAP smears are repeated every 2 years**.
- Beginning at age 30, you are advised to have a PAP smear **every 3 years as long as your past 3 PAP smears have been normal.**
- Some women have medical problems that increase the chance of getting cervical cancer. Talk to your caregiver about these problems. It is especially important to talk to your caregiver if a new problem develops soon after your last PAP smear. **In these cases, your caregiver may recommend more frequent screening and Pap smears.**
- The above recommendations are the same for women who **have** or **have not** gotten the vaccine for HPV (Human Papillomavirus).
- If you had a hysterectomy for a problem that was **not** a cancer or a condition that could lead to cancer, then you no longer need Pap smears.
- If you are between ages 65 and 70, and you have had normal Pap smears going back 10 years, you no longer need Pap smears.
- If you have had past treatment for cervical cancer or a condition that could lead to cancer, you need Pap smears and screening for cancer for at least 20 years after your treatment.

Treatment with an antibiotic or vaginal suppository medicine may be advised. Call your caregiver if you have any questions about your condition.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have abnormal discharge.
- You have bleeding from your vagina after sex.
- You are spotting or bleeding between periods.
- You find out your sex partner has an infection of his genitals.
- You develop a fever of 100º F (37.8º C) or higher.

- You have pain with sex.

Document Released: 12/18/2006 Document Re-Released: 10/15/2010
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