



February 2023



*"Let food be thy
medicine and medicine
be thy food"*

-Hippocrates

Driftless Holistic Wellness
is utilizing office space on
Wednesdays with O'Brien
Physical Therapy!

For in-person Nutrition
Response Testing, ionic
detox foot baths, Bemer
therapy sessions, or picking
up supplements,
you can visit
3208 State Road
La Crosse, WI

-By appointment only –

Safe brands of organic
personal lubricants or
moisturizers



Aloe Cadabra, Good Clean Love,
Emu Oil, Sliquids, Ah Yes OB,
Unrefined Coconut oil,
Bezwecken Hydration Pearls

Driftless Holistic Wellness

Welcome to Driftless Holistic Wellness! Here we focus on finding root causes for our symptoms and nourishing our bodies into more optimal health. This month is for the ladies. We are going to talk about vaginal health, support during our menstrual cycles, and how to truly nourish our bodies to support our uterus, ovaries, urinary tract, and promote hormone balance.

Feminine Health

It's important as women to be mindful of the health of our vaginas, urinary tract, and pelvic region and to pay attention to pelvic discomforts, odd discharge, changes with urination, changes in our menstrual flow, or unusual odors. These can be signs of infection, normal flora imbalance, hormonal imbalance, or pelvic dysfunction.



Ways to Prevent Vaginal Flora Imbalance

- **Avoid scents-** Soaps, moisturizers, or personal care products that are heavily scented or artificially colored can inhibit the growth of healthy vaginal flora and can cause overgrowth of harmful bacteria or yeast in your pelvic region. The fragrances and chemicals can also cause hormonal imbalances by effecting your endocrine organs.
- **Don't excessively wash-** The vagina is a normally acidic environment and over washing with soaps or even douching can remove both the healthy and unhealthy microbes and change your pH, which can lead to an increase of unhealthy bacterial/yeast growth.
- **Avoid moist heat-** Remember to wear breathable, lighter colored, cotton underwear as opposed to synthetic fabrics—this also allows for less moisture and heat to build up and better air flow to your undercarriage, which means less risk for infection.
- **Limit your sugar intake-** eating lots of starches and carbohydrates, sugars, and sweets will feed unhealthy bacteria or yeast inhabiting your vagina or urinary tract- simply cutting out the sugar and starch can help minimize the overgrowth of harmful bacteria and yeast.



Probiotics Brands that support vaginal health

[Flora 12+](#), [CT Biotic](#), [Raw Probiotics Vaginal Care](#), [Complete Probiotics](#), [Fem-Dophilus](#), [MegaFlora Probiotic](#), [Bodyhealth Probiotic](#)

Supplements to support Urinary Health

[Cranberry Complex](#), [Mannose Cranberry](#), [Cranberry/D-mannose](#)

Recipes

Love Your Lady-bits Kombucha

Ingredients:

1 kombucha SCOBY (freeze dried, live from a friend, or [make your own scoby](#))
1 bag of organic green/black tea
2 bags of organic red raspberry leaf tea (loose tea is also okay)
1 gallon of filtered water (non-chlorinated)
1-2 cups of kombucha/starter tea
1 cup of organic sugar (turbinado, Morena, sugar in the raw, etc)
1-gallon glass jar

Directions:

Bring ½ gallon of water to a boil and add in the sugar and stir till dissolved. Add the tea bags and steep for 5-15 minutes. Add in the additional water, scoby, and starter tea. Cover with tea towel or paper towel and rubber band and store in a dark place with good air flow. Should ferment into delicious vinegary kombucha in 5-10 days depending on your kitchen temperature.

(Pro tip- use stinging nettle or ginger teas to add additional uterine support. Mix with organic cranberry juice or candied ginger for a [2nd fermentation process](#) to support your urinary health)

Vaginal Infections

- **Sitz baths-** To soothe itching or discomfort, you can perform a sitz bath with a splash of raw apple cider vinegar (helps acidify the vaginal region and has been [shown](#) to decrease candida yeast, *E.coli*, and *Staph aureus* bacterial overgrowth). You could also try adding Epsom salt to your sitz bath as well, as the magnesium salt acts as a mild antimicrobial and can inhibit bacterial growth.
- **Probiotics-** Eating fermented foods with helpful good bacteria and yeast are crucial for helping maintain a balance to the normal genitourinary flora. When you feel symptoms of urinary or vaginal discomfort, start eating plain yogurt, kefir, raw sauerkraut, drinking kombucha or seek out an oral probiotic with [studied strains](#) that are specific to the female vaginal and urinary tract that help prevent *E.coli* and *Group B Streptococcus* infections. Look for these specific strains: *L. rhamnosus*, *L. salivarius*, *L. plantarum*, *L. crispatus*, and *L. reuteri*
- **Topical yogurt-** For a targeted approach, find an organic, plain yogurt and use a small oral syringe to instill 1-2 ml of yogurt as a vaginal suppository, or apply topically to help soothe itching or discomfort associated with bacterial or yeast infections. This increases the production of lactic acid and directly colonizes healthy bacteria into the vaginal tract. You can even open and sprinkle a probiotic capsule into the yogurt before applying. Be sure to choose a yogurt from cows that are not treated with hormones as we don't want to introduce exogenous hormones to our vaginal region since it is heavily surrounded by lymphatic tissues that could readily absorb them.



Urinary Tract Infections



- **D-Mannose** – This sugar has been [studied](#) and found to help prevent bacteria from sticking to the epithelium in the bladder and urethra. This can be a helpful supplement to try using if you are prone to frequent urinary tract infections.
- **Cranberry extract-** Traditionally used to help [prevent recurrent urinary tract infections](#), cranberries have been found to contain a type of undigestible sugar/starch that is excreted in the urine and prevents the adhesion of the harmful bacteria to the urinary tract lining. Cranberry extract has even been found to reduce the use of antibiotics.
- **Hydration-** Drastically increasing your water intake can help flush out harmful bacteria from your urinary tract. Research [studies](#) have shown instituted water or hydration rounds in care facilities decreased antibiotic use by 58% and hospital admissions related to urinary tract infections by 36%. [Dehydration increases your risk](#) for a UTI.
- **Probiotics-** maintaining a healthy gut and vaginal flora has been [shown](#) to decrease incidence of UTIs. This is especially important if being treated with an antibiotic or for those with recurrent infections. Look again for these strains to support urinary health: *L. rhamnosus*, *L. paracasei*, *L. acidophilus*, *L. plantarum* and *L. gasseri*.

Painful Periods and PMS

Severe menstrual cramping, bloating, breast tenderness, and intense mood swings can be a sign of abnormal hormonal imbalance. Contrary to popular belief and common occurrence, these should not be a normal part of our menstrual cycles. While many women use exogenous hormones to correct or alleviate these symptoms, there are many nutritional and natural strategies to support a less painful menstrual cycle and a healthy hormonal balance.



Recipes

PMS/Seed cycling Energy bites

Follicular Phase Version

Ingredients:

3Tbsp ground flaxseed (cold milled)
 3 Tbsp roughly ground pumpkin seeds (raw- place in food processor and grind)
 1 cup almond flour
 1 cup unsweetened dried cranberries
 ½ cup shredded unsweetened coconut
 ¾ cup almond, cashew, pumpkin seed butter or other nut butter
 ½ tsp vanilla (or ¼ tsp vanilla liquid monkfruit sweetener)
 ½ tsp ground organic ginger
 ½ tsp ground organic cinnamon
 2 Tbsp real maple syrup (optional)

Luteal Phase Version

Same ingredients as above, but substitute out the flaxseed and pumpkin seeds for:

3 Tbsp ground raw sunflower seeds (grind in food processor)
 3 Tbsp ground raw sesame seeds (grind in food processor)

-may also use sunflower seed butter or sesame paste (tahini) with this version.

Directions:

Place your raw seeds into a food processor and grind to a grainy texture. Place the rest of your ingredients into a mixing bowl, add in the ground seeds, and stir until thoroughly mixed. Roll into 1-2 inch balls and store in an airtight container in the fridge separated with parchment paper. Enjoy the Follicular Phase version during days 1-14 of your menstrual cycle and enjoy the Luteal phase version during days 14- 28 or till the end of your cycle. Switch back to the luteal version once you start your period again.

(optional flavor add ins- chocolate chips or cocoa nibs, ground cloves (around the full moon), orange rind, cayenne pepper, or cardamom)

Menstrual Cramps

- **Red Raspberry Leaf Tea-** typically viewed as a women's herb, the red raspberry leaf is high in minerals and calcium and has been [used traditionally](#) as a tea or tincture to minimize both uterine and lower digestive muscle cramping. It tonifies and nourishes the uterus and has been even utilized during the 3rd trimester of pregnancy to help promote more efficient and less traumatic deliveries.
- **Tuna Omeg-3 Oil-** a few research [studies](#) have found an omega 3 supplement to be [as effective as ibuprofen](#) for alleviating the pain during menses. There was a correlation with higher fish intake and less incidence of menstrual cramping found in an [additional study](#). This healthy fat, as previously discussed in earlier newsletters, decreases inflammation as well as supports a healthy immune system and additionally provides necessary components for healthy hormone production.
- **Calcium and Vitamin D supplementation-** Calcium and vitamin D deficiency are [found](#) frequently in women with dysmenorrhea. Additional supplementation leading up to or during your period may help alleviate or minimize cramping. Look for whole food, liquid, or more absorbable forms as these will be most effective.



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- **Ginger-** This versatile herb/spice has also [studied](#) to be as effective period pain reliever in comparison to a combination medicine Novafen (ibuprofen, acetaminophen, and caffeine). It was found to be equally effective in a [systematic review of research](#) as NSAIDs in decreasing the severity of the pain (but less effect on duration) with little to no side effects compared to medication.
- **Seed Cycling-** This is a form of hormone balancing that utilizes different seeds (pumpkin, sesame, flax, and sunflower) that have different ratios of Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids, phytoestrogens, zinc, selenium, and vitamin E, and can contribute to proper production of our female hormones progesterone and estrogen when consumed during the specific phases of the menstrual cycle. This can help minimize menstrual cramping, PMS symptoms for women who are cycling, and decrease menopause symptoms for middle aged women. For more in depth information on how to utilize seed cycling, read [this article](#).

I've had my own struggles with vaginitis over the years during stressful times in my life. This created a constant battle between bacterial and yeast infections and treating them with antibiotics and antifungals. The medications seemed to keep causing one infection after the other. Recently, I found success with these natural supportive options and have been able to avoid the medicines altogether. I've even noticed less cramping with my periods after adding in healthy omega 3 fatty acids and being consistent with the raspberry leaf tea!



-Kay Wiedenbeck RN, BSN, OCN, NRT