

Vaginitis Test - Wet Mount

Definition

The vaginitis wet mount test is a test to detect an infection of the vagina that does not involve the urinary tract.

Alternative Names

Wet prep

Why the Test is performed

The test looks for the cause of vaginal irritation and discharge.

How the Test is performed

You will be asked to lie on your back with your feet in the stirrups. The health care provider will perform a pelvic examination and then insert an instrument called a speculum into the vagina. The speculum is slightly opened. This holds the vagina open and allows the health care provider to see inside.

The health care provider inserts a sterile, moist cotton swab into the vagina to take a sample of discharge. The swab and speculum are removed. The discharge is placed onto a slide and placed under a microscope so that it can be checked for signs of infection.

How the Test Will Feel

There may be slight discomfort with the pelvic examination and when the speculum is inserted.

Risks

There are no risks associated with this test.

Considerations

For information on treatment and prevention, please see the article on vaginitis.

Normal Results

A normal test result means there are no signs of an infection.

What Abnormal Results Mean

Abnormal results mean there is an infection. The most common infections are due to one or a combination of the following:

- Bacterial vaginosis -- bacteria that normally live in the vagina overgrow, causing a heavy, white, fishy-smelling discharge and possibly a rash, painful intercourse, or odor after intercourse
- Trichomoniasis -- a sexually transmitted disease
- Vaginal yeast infection

Additional conditions under which the test may be performed:

- Atrophic vaginitis (associated with lack of estrogen)