

▶ Here's something we bet you didn't know: Certain gynecological problems are more common during summer than winter. In fact, ob-gyns say their phones ring off the hook this time of year. "While gyno issues always suck, they're particularly awful when it's 95 degrees out," says Katharine O'Connell White, M.D., chief of general obstetrics and gynecology at Baystate Medical Center in Springfield, Massachusetts. Here, common summer complaints—and how to cope.

**Bikini-line debacles** Emergency room visits for "lawn maintenance"—related injuries shot up *fivefold* between 2002 and 2010, research shows. "Anytime you yank out the hair with wax, you leave the follicle open to an infection that may only get better with antibiotics," Dr. O'Connell White says. The fix? Pick a salon that uses a fresh wax container for each person. If you shave, replace your razor often to minimize cuts.

# Summer, We Love You, but You're Messing With Our Ladyparts

**Annoying UTIs** "I see them so often they practically keep us gyns in business in the summer," says Dr. O'Connell White. That's because women are having more sex, which pushes bacteria up into the urinary tract. And some studies suggest a link between dehydration and UTIs—the less you urinate, the less you rinse away germs. The tried-and-true rule: "Pee before *and* after sex," Dr. O'Connell White says.

**Down-there rashes** The medical term is *contact dermatitis*. "I see a lot of it this time of year from women hanging out in wet bathing suits or sweaty workout clothes," says Dr. O'Connell White. Swap damp bottoms for cotton undies as soon as you can. "And if you do get a rash, put over-the-counter hydrocortisone cream on it," she says. (Just be sure to use it only on the outer skin; it could irritate your sensitive vaginal tissue.) The rash should clear up in a few days.

**A higher risk of STDs** Not only do women have more sex this time of year—they may also have more *unsafe* sex, research suggests. "It's that carefree summer attitude," says Dr. O'Connell White. "But no summer fling is worth an infection you could have for life. *Insist* he wear a condom."

**Unplanned pregnancies** "I see a huge gap in birth control usage when women go on vacation," says Dr. O'Connell White. "Pills aren't the first thing they think to pack. Women have sex anyway, and—*bam*—they get pregnant." In Berlin, Barcelona, or Paris? Ask for a *kondom*, *condón*, or *préservatif*, and you'll be set. —Shaun Dreisbach

It's all fun and games till someone gets a bikini rash.



BENNY HORNE: ROXY BIKINI, RAG & BONE COLLAR AND CUFFS