Lost tampon [1]

Dear Alice,

I had a tampon, and now I can't find it. It was there. I tried to find it, but I can't. Is that possible? I am really worried about it. It was in for about one day. Please help.

Answer

Dear Reader,

Rest assured; a tampon cannot get lost in your body. The vagina is only about three to four inches deep, but even then, a tampon can get lodged near the top making it hard to reach. The good news is that it won't go anywhere and it will remain there until you find it. You say that the tampon's been missing in action for about a day. It's a good idea to figure out how to remove it in short order; though rare, you do run the risk for a serious infection if the tampon is left in for too long. With that said, it's time to roll up your sleeves and find what you've been looking for!

When a tampon has gone astray, it's best to try to relax. Doing so will make it easier to retrieve. Once you're relaxed, try using your (clean and trimmed) fingers to find the string or the tampon and pull it out. If you're not able to find it, you could try asking a partner or a (close) friend. If you cannot find it yourself or can't find someone who can help, your best bet is to see your health care provider. There's no need to be embarrassed. Just explain the situation and tell her/him that you are concerned about not being able to locate the tampon. As a last resort, you can go to the emergency room.

No matter what action you take to retrieve the missing tampon, it is crucial that you do so without delay. This is because if a tampon is left in for too long, you do run the risk of toxic shock syndrome (TSS) [2]. Toxic shock syndrome is a rare, but life-threatening, infection often caused by Staphylococcus aureus (staph) bacteria. It's also worth mentioning that in addition to leaving in a tampon for too long, studies have shown that using the super plus absorbency tampons may also increase the risk of developing TSS. Symptoms of the infection include a sudden high fever, vomiting, diarrhea, fainting, dizziness, or a sunburn-like rash. If you notice any of these symptoms, seek medical attention immediately. To minimize the risk of TSS in the future, wash your hands before inserting a tampon, change your tampon every four to six hours (especially on heavy flow days), and use the lowest absorbency tampon that is reasonable given the amount of your menstrual flow.
Hope this helps and that you find what you're looking for!

Alice!
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Published date:
Sep 27, 1996
Last reviewed on:
Jul 31, 2015

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