The Myth About Vaginal Cultures
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When is a vaginal culture useful?

- During investigation of reproductive failure

- To identify bacteria present in a vaginal discharge during any portion of the reproductive cycle of the bitch
What is known about bacteria isolated from the bitch vagina?

- Approximately 60% of normal bitches harbor aerobic bacteria in the cranial vagina.
- Approximately 90% have aerobic bacteria in the caudal vagina.
What is known about bacteria isolated from the bitch vagina?
(cont.)

- Numbers of bacteria isolated during proestrus and estrus are higher than at other times

- Anaerobic bacteria are also isolated from the canine vagina including Bacteroididae and Clostridium
Mycoplasma and ureaplasma are similarly found in many bitches.

- Slightly higher percentages of infertile bitches culture positive for the above than did fertile bitches
- 80.5% of bitches with reproductive diseases cultured positive
- 51.3% of clinically healthy bitches test positive
How to culture:

- Use guarded swabs
- Culture anterior vagina
- Uterus not readily accessible to culture per vagina
When to culture:

- In proestrus or estrus
- After whelping
- In presence of vaginal discharge
Interpreting Cultures

- I report culture results as normal vaginal flora or no growth.

- A pure culture with a purulent discharge present or a history of infertility may be significant.
What about VD?

- Brucella canis is the only proven bacterium demonstrated to cause infertility
Remember:

- Brucella can be transmitted both venereally and orally
Finally...

- Often stud owners request a culture prior to mating-- remember stud dogs harbor the same organisms as bitches