



Bacterial Vaginosis

What is Bacterial Vaginosis (BV)?

Bacterial Vaginosis (BV) is one of the most common vaginal infections. Women who are sexually active are more likely to get BV.

How is BV spread?

BV occurs when the normal balance of bacteria in the vagina is disrupted. Why this happens is not known. You are more likely to get BV if you have a new sex partner or multiple sex partners, douche, or use an IUD (intrauterine device) for birth control.

How is BV treated?

- BV is treated with a course of antibiotics.
- Antibiotic treatment is especially important for pregnant women.
- Male partners do not need to be treated.
- BV can recur after treatment.
- Consistent condom use may decrease how often BV recurs.

It is very important that you:

- Take all medicines as prescribed even if you start to feel better.
- Inform your health care provider if you think that you may be pregnant before taking any medications.
- Stop all sexual activity until treatment is completed.

How is BV prevented?

- **Don't have sex.** The risk of getting BV is increased with sexual activity.
- **Limit your number of sexual partners.** The more people you have sex with, the greater the chance of getting an STD.
- **If you choose to have sex, be prepared.** Have condoms with a water-based lubricant on hand and use a new condom every time you have sex.

- **Do not douche.**
- **Have regular exams if you are sexually active.** Having BV can increase your susceptibility to other STD's.
- **Remember: a Pap smear is not a test for STDs.** Ask to be tested if you are at risk.
- **Tell your partner.** Male partners generally do not require treatment. However, BV may spread between female sex partners.

Symptoms of BV:

- Some women do not have symptoms.
- Unpleasant vaginal odor
- Abnormal discharge from the vagina, usually a white or gray color

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