

## Bacterial Vaginosis

*Vaginal infections are very common and affect most women at some point in their lives. While vaginal secretions are normally present in healthy women, it is not normal to have an itchy, red, or irritated vulva or vaginal discharge with an odor that is different from healthy secretions. Bacterial vaginosis, also known as nonspecific vaginitis or gardnerella vaginitis, is a type of vaginal infection caused by an overgrowth of bacteria that is normally found in the vagina.*

### Symptoms

Women with bacterial vaginosis may experience:

- a thin, grayish-white, fishy-smelling discharge from the vagina
- painful urination
- itchy, red, or irritated vulva
- vaginal discomfort during sexual intercourse

However, some women with bacterial vaginosis often have no symptoms.

### Diagnosis

During a gynecological exam, a sample of discharge will be taken from the vagina and will be examined under a microscope by your clinician.

### Causes

Bacterial vaginosis is caused by a decrease of normal vaginal bacteria with an overgrowth of other anaerobic bacteria. The reason for this shift is unknown. Any woman may be diagnosed with bacterial vaginosis, although the infection is more common in sexually active women. The routine treatment of sexual partners is not recommended.

### Treatment

Bacterial vaginosis is curable; it is usually treated with antibiotics which are taken orally or as a vaginal cream.

### Preventing a Recurrence

Once your infection has cleared up, there are a number of things you can do to help prevent recurrences:

- keep cool
- avoid nylon underwear, pantihose, or tight-fitting pants
- avoid sitting around in a wet bathing suit or workout clothing
- avoid feminine hygiene sprays; scented toilet paper and deodorant tampons/pads; or bubble baths
- refrain from douching; routine washing every day with an unscented soap should be sufficient
- wipe from front to back following urination or a bowel movement. Vaginal infections can be caused by normal microorganisms in the gastrointestinal tract and may be spread to the vulva and vagina.

Although not all vaginal infections are sexually transmitted, bacterial vaginosis can coexist with sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as trichomoniasis or chlamydia. Your clinician will examine you for these infections as well, if indicated.

### Preventing STIs

- Abstinence from genital or oral/genital contact with a partner eliminates the risk of being infected with an STI.
- If you are having intercourse, consistent condom use (every time, start to finish) provides significant protection from STIs and may reduce your chances of getting a viral infection.
- Discuss safe sex before you engage in sexual activity with a partner; don't wait until the heat of the moment.
- Limiting the number of sexual partners you have in your lifetime decreases your likelihood of exposure to STIs.

Recognize that you can make these choices to stay healthier and happier!

### Test Results and Advice Nurse

Please call the nurse for test results and advice: 863-4463

**Appointments**

Appointments can be made in person or by phone. If you are unable to keep your appointment, please call and cancel. Otherwise you will be charged for the visit.

To schedule or cancel appointments, call: 863-0774

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