

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR BACTERIAL VAGINOSIS?

BV can make it easier to become infected with other STDs, such as chlamydia and gonorrhea. Although BV will sometimes clear up without treatment, all women with symptoms of BV should be treated to avoid such complications as PID. Male partners generally do not need to be treated. However, BV may spread between female sex partners.

Treatment is especially important for pregnant women. All pregnant women who have ever had a premature delivery or low birth weight baby should be considered for a BV examination. All pregnant women who have symptoms of BV should be checked and treated.

BV can be treated with medicines prescribed by a health care provider. Two different antibiotics are recommended as treatment for BV: metronidazole or clindamycin. These can be used whether a woman is pregnant or not. BV can recur after treatment.

HOW CAN BACTERIAL VAGINOSIS BE PREVENTED?

BV is not completely understood by scientists and the best ways to prevent it are unknown.

However, it is known that BV is associated with having a new sex partner or having multiple sex partners. It is seldom found in women who have never had intercourse. Because of this, practicing sexual abstinence (abstaining from any sexual contact) while single and remaining sexually faithful during

marriage puts a person in a low risk group for BV.

The increased risk of HIV/AIDS and PID found with women infected with BV makes it important to see your healthcare provider for evaluation and treatment if you think you have BV.

Sources and Resources

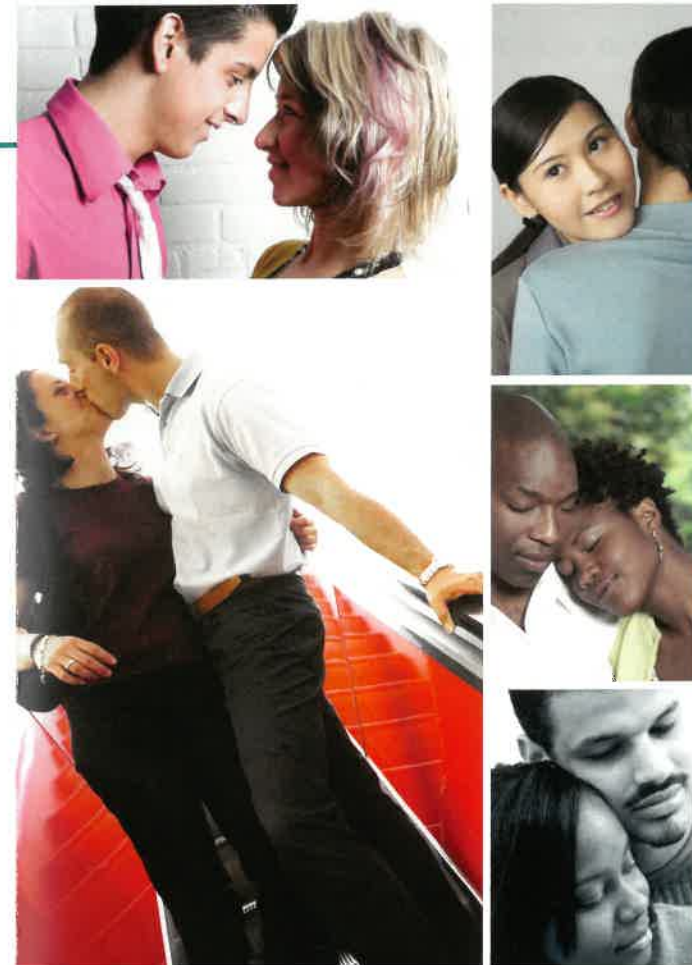
1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for HIV, STD and TB Prevention Division of Sexually Transmitted Diseases, STDs and Pregnancy - CDC Fact Sheet, found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/std/pregnancy/STDFact-Pregnancy.htm>, accessed 5-21-2018.
2. General information on BV: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for HIV, STD and TB Prevention Division of Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Bacterial Vaginosis, Bacterial Vaginosis - CDC Fact Sheet, found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/std/bv/stdfact-bacterial-vaginosis.htm>, accessed 5-21-2018.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Sexually Transmitted Diseases Treatment Guidelines, 2015, found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment/default.htm>, accessed 5-21-2018.
4. Hillier S and Holmes K. Bacterial vaginosis. In: K. Holmes, P. Sparling, P. Mardh et al (eds). Sexually Transmitted Diseases, 3rd Edition. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1999, 563-586.



vaginosis

GET THE FACTS

*To earn 1 Baby Buck:
Handwrite a reflection that fills one
side of a notebook page.*



©2018 Heritage House '76, Inc.
919 S. Main St. Snowflake, AZ 85937
1-800-858-3040 item no. 9590BV
reprints and quantity discounts available:
www.hh76.org • 6-1-2018

BACTERIAL VAGINOSIS

DISEASE INFORMATION

WHAT IS BACTERIAL VAGINOSIS?

Bacterial vaginosis (BV) is the most common vaginal infection in women of childbearing age.

HOW COMMON IS BACTERIAL VAGINOSIS?

In the United States, bacterial vaginosis affects an estimated 21.2 million women between the ages of 14 and 49. 84% of those who did have BV did not report any symptoms, and 25% of pregnant women were also found to have the infection.²

HOW DO PEOPLE GET BACTERIAL VAGINOSIS?

The cause of BV is not fully understood. BV is associated with an imbalance in the bacteria that are normally found in a woman's vagina. The vagina normally contains mostly "good" bacteria and fewer "harmful" bacteria. BV develops when there is a change in the conditions within the vagina that causes an increase in harmful bacteria.

Not much is known about how women get BV. There are many unanswered questions about the role that harmful bacteria play in causing BV. Any woman can get BV. However, some activities or behaviors can upset the normal balance of bacteria in the vagina and put women at increased risk include:

- Having a new sex partner or multiple sex partners
- Douching

However, we do not know how sex contributes to BV. BV is not considered an STD, but having BV can increase your chances of getting an STD. BV may also affect women who have never had sex.

Women do not get BV from toilet seats, bedding, swimming pools or from touching objects around them.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF BACTERIAL VAGINOSIS?

Women with BV may have an abnormal vaginal discharge with an unpleasant odor. Some women report a strong fish-like odor, especially after intercourse. Discharge, if present, is usually white or gray; it can be thin. Women with BV may also have burning during urination or itching around the outside of the vagina or both. Some women with BV report no signs or symptoms at all.

WHAT ARE THE COMPLICATIONS OF BACTERIAL VAGINOSIS?

In most cases, BV causes no complications. But there are some serious risks from BV including:

- Having BV can increase a woman's chances of getting HIV infection if she is exposed to the HIV virus.
- Having BV increases the chances that an HIV-infected woman can pass HIV to others.

- Having BV and developing PID following surgical procedures such as a hysterectomy or an abortion seem to be related.
- Having BV while pregnant may put a woman at increased risk for some complications of pregnancy, such as preterm delivery.
- BV can make it easier for a woman to get other STDs, such as herpes simplex virus (HSV), chlamydia and gonorrhea.

HOW DOES BACTERIAL VAGINOSIS AFFECT A PREGNANT WOMAN AND HER BABY?

Pregnant women with BV more often have babies who are born premature or with low birth weight (less than 5.5 pounds).

The bacteria that cause BV can sometimes infect the uterus (womb) and fallopian tubes (tubes that carry eggs from the ovaries to the uterus). This type of infection is called PID (pelvic inflammatory disease). PID can cause infertility or damage the fallopian tubes. Damage to the fallopian tubes may make ectopic pregnancy and infertility more likely in the future. Ectopic pregnancy is a life-threatening condition in which a fertilized egg grows outside the uterus, usually in a fallopian tube which can rupture.

HOW IS BACTERIAL VAGINOSIS DIAGNOSED?

A health care provider must examine the vagina for signs of BV and perform laboratory tests on a sample of vaginal fluid to look for bacteria that cause BV.