



Bacterial vaginosis

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While every effort has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the information in this publication, it cannot replace medical advice. Please visit a health professional if you have any concerns with your health. Included below is a list of places where you can get more information.

What is bacterial vaginosis?

Many bacteria live in the vagina and rarely cause any problems. Bacterial vaginosis is caused when there are too many of one kind of bacteria, mainly Gardnerella. It's normally harmless, but can lead to unpleasant symptoms or problems with pregnancy.

How do you get bacterial vaginosis?

You can get bacterial vaginosis without sexual contact, but it is often linked with sexual activity.

What are the signs and symptoms of bacterial vaginosis?

A grey discharge from the vagina with a fishy or musty smell. The smell can get stronger after sex or during your period. Some women can have bacterial vaginosis but have no symptoms at all. Bacterial vaginosis is usually harmless and often goes away by itself. However, if you are pregnant, bacterial vaginosis can cause early labour, so see your doctor. Bacterial vaginosis may cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), which can lead to infertility (so you can't have a baby).

How do I know if I have bacterial vaginosis?

Your doctor will check your vagina for discharge. The doctor will test the discharge for bacterial vaginosis. The doctor may send a sample to a laboratory for more tests because the signs of bacterial vaginosis can be similar to other infections, such as chlamydia or other sexually transmitted infections. Some of these infections are more serious and/or need a different treatment - for example, the treatment for bacterial vaginosis will not cure chlamydia.

What do I do if I have bacterial vaginosis?

See your GP or doctor of your choice if you think you may have bacterial vaginosis. Once diagnosis is confirmed, don't have sex until after you have completed the full course of treatment.

How do I get treated?

Bacterial vaginosis can be treated by taking a course of antibiotics or by applying a cream. It is very important to finish the whole course of antibiotics. If you do not have symptoms or the symptoms are not causing you problems then treatment is not necessary.

How do I reduce the risks of getting bacterial vaginosis?

- After going to the toilet, always wipe gently, from the front to the back, to stop bacteria from getting into the vagina
- Using pads instead of tampons can help, because tampons can change the normal balance of vaginal bacteria





- If you need treatment, bacterial vaginosis is usually treated with antibiotics. You should take these with food
- Avoid alcohol during the treatment and for 3 days afterwards as it can affect the antibiotics and make you vomit. Make sure you take all the medicine
- If you're pregnant, you may need to see a specialist
- Your sex partner doesn't usually need treatment if you have bacterial vaginosis.

Where can I find more information on bacterial vaginosis?

For further information contact your GP, a doctor of your choice, telephone Health Direct (1800 022 222) or the Sexual Health Helpline (9227 6178 for metropolitan callers or 1800 198 205 for country callers).

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http://www.public.health.wa.gov.au/2/405/2/bacterial_vagin.pm

