



Bacterial Vaginosis

What is Bacterial Vaginosis (BV)?

This is a common condition in women caused by an overgrowth of bacteria that live normally in the vagina. This can happen if the acid level in the vagina falls.

What causes it?

The cause of BV is not known. It is not sexually transmitted but is seen in sexually active women

What are the symptoms?

There may be a vaginal discharge which is usually thin and grey or white in colour. You may also notice an unpleasant 'fishy' smell especially after sex.

What other problems can it cause?

Generally there are no long-term problems with BV although it may recur and this can be distressing. Women with BV in pregnancy may have a low birth weight or premature baby. These women should have a test for BV in future pregnancies.

BV has been associated with Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID) in women having procedures such as termination of pregnancy or IUD insertion. Many doctors will test for BV before these procedures are performed.

BV may also be associated with an increased risk of HIV infection.

What tests do you do?

BV is diagnosed by taking a swab from the vagina which is then examined under a microscope.

What is the Treatment?

B.V. may clear up without treatment. Treatment can be offered to all women with symptoms.

Treatment is with a single dose of antibiotic tablets. You must not drink alcohol for 24 hours when taking the antibiotics, as you may feel very sick if you do.

If BV recurs a longer antibiotic course may be recommended

Further fact sheets are available at:

http://www.nt.gov.au/health/cdc/fact_sheets/fact.shtml

For more information contact Clinic 34 in your area.

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