

Bacterial Vaginosis (BV) (Non Specific Vaginitis; Bacterial Vaginitis)

What is it?

Bacterial Vaginosis (BV) is an imbalance of the normal bacteria found in the vagina. This imbalance then lets many other types of bacteria grow. The normal balance can be affected by stress, frequent vaginal sex, antibiotics and some forms of birth control.

BV is common in sexually active women but is not considered to be sexually transmitted.

What are the symptoms?

Half of the women with BV have no symptoms even though BV may show up on a test. If there are symptoms, they can include:

- fishy odour -sometimes more noticeable after sex
- white or grayish watery vaginal discharge -sometimes large amounts
- pain, burning or itching in the vagina -not common

How is it diagnosed?

BV is diagnosed by having swabs taken from the vagina. This is important because there are vaginal infections with similar symptoms.

How is it treated?

Women having pelvic surgery, having an IUD inserted or who are pregnant should be treated. Women with symptoms or ongoing problems will be assessed and treated. You may be prescribed pills called metronidazole (flagyl). Medication

(creams) that you can buy in the drugstore for yeast infections do not work for BV.

Do not drink alcohol (wine, beer, liquor) while taking flagyl and for 24 hours after taking medication. Flagyl can cause a metallic taste in the mouth and dryness in the mouth and vagina.

If the symptoms keep coming back and are hard to treat, you might want to keep a diary of your symptoms and your activities. This allows you to:

- compare the amount of discharge and other symptoms over time
- see if there are patterns
- link symptoms with activities

Talk to the doctor about vaginal health and further treatment.

Complications

Having a procedure such as an IUD insertion, pelvic surgery or an abortion when you have BV has been linked to pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). BV in pregnant females may also be associated with premature delivery. Having BV may also increase the risk of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) if you are exposed.

See the other side for “Vaginal Health”.

Use condoms to help prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV and hepatitis B. Condoms are free in Healthy Sexuality Clinics.

**For more information call Peel Health at 905-799-7700
and ask for Sexual Health Information
or visit
peelregion.ca/health peelsexualhealth.ca intheknowpeel.ca**