

What is Bacterial Vaginosis?

- Bacterial vaginosis (BV) is an infection of the vagina caused by an imbalance of bacteria
- It is not classified as a sexually transmitted infection (STI) but is more common in people who are sexually active
 - Your risk of BV is higher if you have more than one sex partner, a new sex partner, or have sex without a condom or other barrier method of contraception
- Every vagina will have a balance of “good” and “bad” bacteria, with the “good” bacteria controlling the growth of the “bad” types
 - In BV, this balance is upset, but experts are unsure how this imbalance occurs
- Douching increases the risk of BV.

What are the symptoms of Bacterial Vaginosis?

- The symptoms of BV are usually quite mild, and many infected people may not notice any symptoms
- The most common symptom of BV is a fishy-smelling discharge from the vagina that may become stronger after sex and during menstruation
 - The discharge may appear greyish white or yellow
 - Itching or burning in the vagina can also occur
- BV can make the reproductive tract more vulnerable to infection or inflammation
 - It increases the risk of miscarriage and preterm birth in pregnant people

How is Bacterial Vaginosis diagnosed?

- BV is diagnosed by a doctor after a physical examination and lab tests
- Your physician may take a swab of your vagina to test your vaginal discharge for bacteria and unusual cells.
 - The pH of your vaginal discharge may also be measured

How is Bacterial Vaginosis treated?

- BV may go away on its own without treatment
- Alternatively, it can be treated with antibiotics (usually metronidazole or clindamycin)
 - This medication may be oral pills or a cream applied to the vagina
- BV may return after treatment.

References:

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- Government of Alberta. Alberta treatment guidelines of sexually transmitted infections (STI) in adolescents and adults. 2018. [Cited 2022 Feb 4]. Available from: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/93a97f17-5210-487d-a9ae-a074c66ad678/resource/bc78159b-9cc4-454e-8dcd-cc85e0fcc435/download/sti-treatment-guidelines-alberta-2018.pdf>