



GEORGIAN BAY WOMEN'S CLINIC

Bacterial Vaginosis: What You Should Know

What's Bacterial Vaginosis?

Bacterial vaginosis (BV) is a common vaginal infection caused by an imbalance of bacteria in the vagina. It's not a sexually transmitted infection (STI), but it can increase the risk of getting one. BV can cause symptoms like unusual vaginal discharge and odor.

What Are the Symptoms?

Many people with BV don't have symptoms, but when they do, they can include:

- Thin, white, or gray vaginal discharge
- Strong, fishy odor, especially after sex
- Burning sensation during urination
- Itching around the vagina

How Can You Prevent It?

Practice Good Hygiene: Wash your genital area with mild soap and water, and avoid douching or using scented

products.

Limit Douching: Douching disrupts the natural balance of bacteria in the vagina and can increase the risk of BV.

Safe Sex Practices: Using condoms during sex can reduce the risk of BV, but it's not foolproof.

How Is It Diagnosed?

Physical Examination: Healthcare providers can often diagnose BV by examining the vaginal discharge and checking the vaginal pH.

Swab Test: A swab of vaginal discharge may be taken for further testing to confirm the diagnosis.

How Is It Treated?

Antibiotics: BV is usually treated with antibiotics, such as metronidazole or clindamycin, taken orally or applied vaginally.

Follow Instructions: Take all prescribed medication as directed, even if symptoms improve before finishing the medication.

Avoid Alcohol: Drinking alcohol while taking certain antibiotics for BV can cause unpleasant side effects.

Follow-Up

Re-Check: If symptoms persist or recur after treatment, follow up with your healthcare provider for further evaluation.

Regular Check-Ups: Regular gynecological exams are important for maintaining vaginal health and catching any issues early.

Remember:

- BV is common and treatable with antibiotics.
- While BV isn't usually considered a sexually transmitted infection, it can increase the risk of getting one, so practicing safe sex is still important.
- If you experience symptoms of BV or have concerns about your vaginal health, see your healthcare provider for evaluation and treatment.