

Fact Sheet

Bacterial Vaginosis

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What is Bacterial Vaginosis?

Bacterial Vaginosis is sometimes called BV or gardnerella. This is a very common condition which affects women only.

BV is not a sexually transmissible infection, however being sexually active may increase the possibility of BV occurring.

It is normal for different types of bacteria to live in the vagina. If the mix of bacteria changes, then BV can occur.

How will you know if you have BV?

Many women may not notice anything. Some women might notice:

- a change in vaginal discharge
- a change in vaginal smell, which may be unpleasant, and which may be worse after sex, or after periods.

How can you be checked for BV?

You can have a test done at any Sexual Health Clinic or by your own doctor. A Pap smear is not a test for BV.

How do you get BV?

We don't always know what causes BV, however, BV may be caused by:

- sex with many partners
- sex with new partners
- spermicides
- IUD (devices to prevent pregnancy)
- tampons left in too long
- vaginal deodorants
- washing out (douching) the vagina



What is the treatment for BV?

Treatment can include antibiotic tablets or vaginal Creams. However, BV does not always need to be treated.

Treatment may be offered if:

- the discharge or smell is a problem for you
- you are going to have an IUD inserted
- you are having a termination of pregnancy to reduce your risk of PID.
- you are pregnant and symptomatic
- you have PID

PID (Pelvic Inflammatory Disease) is an infection of the womb, tubes and ovaries.

What if BV is not treated?

The changes found with BV may go away by themselves. For pregnant women there is no clear evidence of benefits in pregnancy outcomes with treatment.

What about partners?

Sexual partners usually do not need treatment because BV is not considered a sexually transmitted infection.

**Telling a partner is not always easy.
Sexual health counsellors can advise you on the
best way to do this**

How do you prevent BV?

- change tampons regularly
- avoid anything that can irritate your vagina including spermicides, deodorants and douches
- use condoms and dams, and be sure to use new condoms and dams after contact with the anal area.

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Western Sydney Sexual Health Centre
Jeffery House
162 Marsden Street Parramatta
02 9843 3124
Mon, Tues & Fri 0900 am - 0400 pm
Weds 1000 am - 0400 pm
Thurs 0400 pm - 0700 pm (appointment
only)

Kelly Close Services
Kelly Close Mt Druitt - 02 9881 1206
Mon 0900 am - 0400 pm
Weds & Fri 0900 am - 0100 pm

What if I have more questions?

If you have any questions or worries please
phone the clinic and ask to speak to a nurse
or a counsellor.

**We welcome further feedback on this brochure
as a way of continually improving our service.**

Send your feedback to:
WSLHD-Get_Involved@health.nsw.gov.au