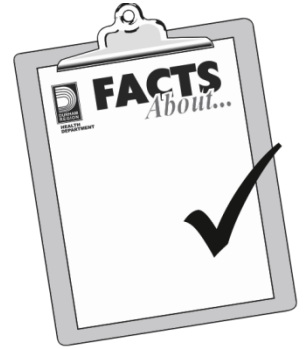




FACTS

About...



HEALTH DEPARTMENT



BACTERIAL VAGINOSIS

What is it?

Bacterial Vaginosis (BV) is an infection caused when there is too much of certain bacteria in the vagina. BV is the most common cause of vaginal discharge in women who are sexually active and can cause pregnant women to deliver their baby early. BV may increase the risk of a pelvic infection following procedures such as intrauterine device (IUD) insertion, surgical abortion, or other surgical procedures involving the female reproductive organs.

How is it spread?

BV is not a sexually transmitted infection (STI) and does not spread to male sexual partners. Having a new sex partner, multiple sex partners, sex with another female, as well as douching (rinsing the vagina with a liquid), can upset the balance of bacteria in the vagina. This places a woman at increased risk for BV. Having BV can increase the risk of getting other STIs.

What do I look for?

Many women with BV have no symptoms. When women have symptoms, they often have a "fishy-smelling" vaginal discharge that they might notice more after sex. The discharge is watery and off-white or gray. Women may also notice a burning feeling in the vagina.

How is it treated?

BV can clear on its own without any treatment. If you have symptoms, your health care provider can send a sample of the vaginal fluid to the lab to be tested for BV. An antibiotic may be prescribed, or over-the-counter medication recommended. It is important to finish all the medication as directed, even if you are feeling better. Treatment is safe and especially important for pregnant women. Return of BV may occur and repeat testing and treatment may be needed.

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For more information
Durham Region Health Department
905-666-6241 1-800-841-2729 durham.ca
If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.



BACTERIAL VAGINOSIS

How can I protect myself?

- Do not douche. Douching upsets the balance of good and harmful bacteria in your vagina
- Avoid using deodorants or perfumed products in and around your vaginal area
- Wash your anus and vagina every day to keep harmful bacteria away
- Wipe from front to back after going to the toilet
- Use a mild laundry detergent to wash your underwear
- Change your tampons or pads frequently
- Limit the number of sex partners or abstain from sex
- Use a condom every time you have sex
- Get tested for STIs

May 6, 2019

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