



## Bacterial vaginosis

Bacterial vaginosis (BV) is a condition that happens when there is too much of certain bacteria in the vagina. This changes the normal balance of bacteria in the vagina.

### Symptoms:

Many women with BV do not have symptoms. If they have symptoms, it might include the following

- A thin white or gray vaginal discharge;
- Pain, itching, or burning in the vagina;
- A strong fish-like odor, especially after sex;
- Burning when peeing;
- Itching around the outside of the vagina.





## **Causes:**

The vagina contains many types of bacteria (called a microbiome), just like the digestive system. Bacterial vaginosis (BV) happens when some of the vaginal bacteria grow more quickly than others. Too much of one type of bacteria leads to an imbalance.

## **Risk factors:**

- Douching and overuse of vaginal lotions;
- Previous infection of a sexually transmitted disease;
- Use of an intrauterine device (IUD);
- Use of deodorant soap;
- Hormonal changes associated with puberty, pregnancy and menopause;
- Overuse of some medications
- Smoking.

## **Complications:**

- Being at a higher risk of sexually transmitted infections.
- Pelvic inflammations: including the inflammations affecting the fallopian tubes and ovaries, which may increase the risk of infertility.

## **Prevention:**

- Keep the vaginal area dry;
- Unless prescribed by a gynecologist, don't use vaginal lotions;
- Avoid applying deodorant soap or other products to the vaginal area;
- Avoid using too strong cleaning products when washing underwear;
- Wear cotton underwear;
- Change underwear and towels frequently;
- After using toilet, wipe front to back, and not the other way around.





## **Diagnosis:**

During an exam, a sample of fluid is taken from the vagina. Doctors view the fluid under a microscope, test it in the office or send it to the lab for analysis.

## **Treatment:**

The doctor prescribes antibiotics. If you have symptoms, you should be checked and treated by a healthcare provider. It is important to take all the medicine your provider prescribes, even if your symptoms go away. Treatment also may reduce the risk for getting other STDs. BV can return even after treatment.

Male sex partners of women with BV do not need treatment.

