

Bacterial Vaginosis

(also called "Gardnerella" or "BV")

"B.V." (bacterial vaginosis) is a condition where the normal bacteria in the vagina are replaced by a large number of other bacteria (not normal ones). We don't know how these bacteria get there. There is a medication that can reduce the abnormal bacteria.

How do I know if I have B.V.?

Women may have any of the following problems:

- gray, yellow or white "fishy" smelling discharge from the vagina.
- May have itching around the vagina.
- No symptoms but the clinician may find B.V. while looking at your vaginal fluid under the microscope.
- We doubt that B.V. is carried by men, and we don't usually treat them for it.

Is B.V. a serious problem?

- If a woman has B.V., is pregnant and is planning to continue the pregnancy, we suggest treatment because the B.V. bacteria can cause early delivery.
- If a woman has B.V., is pregnant and is planning an abortion, she should be treated before the abortion to prevent infection in the uterus from the B.V. bacteria.
- If a woman is not pregnant and does not have any complaints with B.V., it is not necessary to take the medicine.

How do I avoid getting B.V.?

- Do not douche (rinsing the vagina with water or other liquid)! We think douching increases the B.V. bacteria in the vagina and washes away the good bacteria that help keep the vagina healthy. Douching also has been linked to P.I.D. (a serious infection in the uterus, tubes and ovaries).

What is the treatment for B.V. ?

- Medicine called metronidazole or Clindamycin can be given in pill or vaginal cream form.
- Ask your clinician about special instructions for the medicine if you drink alcohol.
- Some women get B.V. over and over, especially after sex. This may be due to their partner's semen (cum) causing the acidity of their vagina to change. This allows the B.V. bacteria to grow. Using condoms may help prevent this.
- There is current research to see if B.V. can cause a woman to be more likely to get other STDs. There is also research for new medications that could help normal bacteria return to the vagina.

For more information about STD's, consult these websites:

<http://www.noah-health.org/>

<http://www.ashastd.org/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/std/>

<http://www.dph.sf.ca.us/sfcityclinic/>

<http://www.sfsi.org/>

Teen Resources:

<http://www.iwannaknow.org>

<http://kidshealth.org/teen/>

<http://www.teenhealthfx.com/>

Women's Resources:

<http://www.ppgg.org/>

<http://www.4woman.gov/>

<http://endabuse.org/>

WARNING: HIV is also an STD! All STDs are spread by having unsafe sex. When you get infected with an STD, you could also be getting HIV. Protect yourself - use condoms (male or female)!



For a STD check-up or treatment,
see your doctor, local clinic, or come to:

City Clinic
356 Seventh Street
(between Folsom and Harrison)
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415)487-5500
<http://www.dph.sf.ca.us/sfcityclinic/>