



planned  
parenthood

TORONTO

**YOUR  
HEALTH.  
YOUR  
CHOICE.**

# Bacterial Vaginosis

Talk to your partner(s) about sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and your health before you have sex. You can pass on an STI without knowing you have it. During sex, you can use latex condoms to lower your chances of getting STIs.

## **What is Bacterial Vaginosis?**

Bacteria vaginosis is caused by a combination of bacteria. Normally they grow in small amounts in a women's vagina and rectum. If too much grows, it may cause a different vaginal discharge with a strange smell. Bacteria Vaginosis can cause bothersome symptoms but it is not harmful.

## **How do you prevent a Bacterial Vaginosis infection?**

- ★ Do not use deodorant tampons or pads, perfumed soaps, bath oils, or feminine hygiene sprays.
- ★ Wear cotton underwear during the day. It's better not to wear underwear when you sleep.
- ★ Wear loose fitting pants.
- ★ Avoid douching.
- ★ Change out of your wet bathing suit or sweaty exercise clothes as soon as possible.

## **How can you tell if you have Bacterial Vaginosis?**

### **Women**

- ★ Discharge from your vagina that is white or grey.
- ★ Discharge from your vagina that smells like fish especially after sexual intercourse.

### **Men**

- ★ It is unusual for men to have bacterial vaginosis, no symptoms.

**It is important to use condoms or a latex barrier with sexual partners to decrease the risk of getting a sexually transmitted infection.**

### **How do you get tested for Bacterial Vaginosis?**

A clinician may be able to tell by looking at the discharge from your vagina, however, they will most likely take a swab from your vagina.

Men are not usually tested for bacterial vaginosis infections.

### **How is Bacterial Vaginosis treated?**

Bacterial vaginosis in your vagina is not harmful. You only need to treat a bacterial vaginosis infection if the symptoms are bothering you.

Women can be treated with prescription drugs such as flagyl or clindamycin. The infection can be treated by taking a medication by mouth, or by inserting a medicated cream into the vagina.

Lactobacillus (the bacteria found in yoghurt) can help control the symptoms. You can put one or two yoghurt capsules in your vagina before bedtime for one week. You can buy these lactobacillus yoghurt capsules at the health food store. You should keep them in the fridge.

Men are not usually treated for bacterial vaginosis.

### **Do you need a follow up test?**

If you feel better, you don't need another test.

### **If you need further information or would like to book an appointment, call:**

Planned Parenthood Toronto Health Services for youth ages 13 to 29. 416-927-7171. Health Services offers same-day, scheduled and drop-in appointments. For more information visit [www.ppt.on.ca](http://www.ppt.on.ca).

Women's Programming at the Bay Centre for Birth Control for women of all ages at 416-351-3700.

Youth can also access information about sexual health by calling the Teen Sex InfoLine at 416-961-3200 or chat live using MSN messenger at [spiderbytes@hotmail.com](mailto:spiderbytes@hotmail.com) from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Monday to Wednesday and 12 noon to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. You can also email us a question anytime at [askus@spiderbytes.ca](mailto:askus@spiderbytes.ca) or visit [www.spiderbytes.ca](http://www.spiderbytes.ca).