

## **BACTERIAL VAGINOSIS (BV)**

**What is BV?** Bacterial vaginosis (BV) is the most common type of vaginal infection. Up to half of all women with BV may have no symptoms at all. Women with symptoms usually have an increased, milk-like vaginal discharge with an unpleasant foul or “fishy” odour. This odour is often worse after intercourse. Symptoms such as itching and irritation may not occur with bacterial vaginosis.

**Cause:** The cause of bacterial vaginosis is an overgrowth of one or more types of the bacteria that normally live in the vagina. BV is **not** a sexually transmitted infection (STI). No one gave it to you, and you can not give it to your partner. BV does not need treatment unless you have symptoms, or if you are having an abortion or having an IUD inserted.

**Treatments:** There are several effective treatments, but BV may come back after any of them. One treatment is the oral antibiotic Metronidazole (Flagyl). Partners do not need to be treated. Do not drink alcohol within 24 hours of taking the Metronidazole. There are several vaginal treatments. Vitamin C can be taken as the prescription medication PrevGyne or you can use 250 mg Vitamin C tablets (the kind you would take by mouth) inside your vagina one daily for 7 days. Boric acid capsules 600 mg daily also work and so do charcoal tampons (V-Fresh Plus).

**Prevention:** There are no natural ways to prevent BV that we know about. Taking one 500 mg capsule of metronidazole once a week by mouth or inserting one 250 mg Vitamin C tablet once a week will prevent most cases of BV. So will using charcoal tampons (V-Fresh Plus) or boric acid capsules 600 mg.

# Willow

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