

Bacterial Vaginosis, Trichomoniasis and yeast infection

There are some conditions that are not always spread through sexual contact but still affect the sexual organs, especially in women. In some cases it is not clear what causes the infection, but they can be treated.

Bacterial Vaginosis (BV, garnerella)

Bacterial Vaginosis (BV) is one of the most common vaginal infections. It is caused by an imbalance between the "good and "bad" bacteria that normal live in the vagina. It is not clear how women get vaginosis, but it is unusual for a woman who has never had sex to get it. It can be caused by taking medicines like antibiotics that kill both good and bad bacteria.

There is a relationship between BV and low birth-weight babies. The bacteria that cause vaginosis are sometimes found in the uterus and tubes of women with pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), but it is not known if vaginosis is a cause of PID.

Who is at risk for BV?

You are more likely to get BV if you:

- Have a new sex partner or multiple sex partners
- Douche
- Use an IUD (intrauterine device) for birth control

Signs and symptoms

- Some women do not have symptoms.
- Abnormal discharge from the vagina with unpleasant vaginal odor
- Discharge usually a white or gray color
- Burning during urination
- Itching around the outside of the vagina.

Testing

The health care provider will look at the vagina for signs of BV and do tests on the sample of vaginal fluid to look for bacteria.

How is BV Treated?

See a health care provider for an exam and tests to figure out diagnosis and best treatment. Treatment is a type of antibiotic prescribed by a health care provider. Male partners do not need to be treated. BV often comes back after treatment. Consistent condom use may decrease how often BV recurs.

- **If NOT treated -**
 - May increase risk for getting HIV and other STDs. May increase the chance of passing HIV to a sex partner.
 - Possible problems if a woman is pregnant.

- Increased risk of getting PID after a surgery such as a hysterectomy or an abortion.

More information

- Bacterial Vaginosis information (American Social Health Association)
http://www.ashastd.org/learn/learn_vag_trich_bv.cfm
- Bacterial Vaginosis fact sheet (Centers for Disease Control)
<http://www.cdc.gov/std/BV/STDFact-Bacterial-Vaginosis.htm>
- Vaginitis information (Planned Parenthood)
<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/health-topics/womens-health/vaginitis-4305.htm>



Trichomoniasis (trich, trichomonas vaginalis)

This common infection is caused by tiny parasites called protozoa. They live in wet areas of the genitals, such as the urethra or vagina. While it is most commonly passed from one person to the next during sex, it can sometimes be spread through genital contact with wet towels, wet toilet seats or wet clothing. Trich doesn't cause any lasting damage for adults but it can cause pregnant women to have premature or low birth-weight babies.

Signs and symptoms - *Most men, and many women, have no symptoms.* Symptoms in women usually appear between 5 and 28 days of exposure. But symptoms can also appear months or even years later. The infection can be passed on to others even if they have no symptoms.

- Inflammation. In women it can cause vaginitis (inflammation in the vagina) and in men it can cause urethritis (inflammation in the urethra) inside the penis.
 - Yellow-green or gray vaginal discharge (often foamy).
 - Strong odor and pain during sex or urinating.
 - Irritation or itching around the vagina.
 - Lower abdominal pain (rare).
 - Men may have a discharge from their penis.
- **Testing** - The health care provider will use a swab to take fluid from the vagina or penis and look for the protozoa under a microscope. A better test is a culture but it takes longer and is more expensive. Trich can also be found in the cells taken for a Pap test, and males semen can be checked.
 - **Treatment** - The health care provider will prescribe an antibiotic. Be sure to tell your provider if you are pregnant, because some of the medicines should not be used by pregnant women. It's important not to have sex until you are finished with the medicine. All partners should be treated too. If all partners are not treated at the same time, you can get trich again.

More information

- Trichomoniasis information (American Social Health Association)
http://www.ashastd.org/learn/learn_vag_trich_tri.cfm
- Trichomoniasis information (Centers for Disease Control)
<http://www.cdc.gov/std/trichomonas/default.htm>
- Trichomoniasis information (Planned Parenthood)
<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/health-topics/stds-hiv-safer-sex/trichomoniasis-4282.htm>



Yeast infection (Candidiasis)

Candidiasis is a common problem if the body grows too much yeast. Yeast is part of the normal balance in the vagina, penis and anal area. When the normal bacteria that keep yeast under control are out of balance, too many yeast cells grow. This is called overgrowth or more frequently a "yeast infection"

Yeast infections are not usually spread through sex. Antibiotic medicines can upset the normal balance in the vagina and cause yeast overgrowth. Hormone changes during pregnancy, use of birth control pills and menstruation can also cause yeast to grow.

- **Signs and symptoms**

- Discharge that looks like cottage cheese.
- Itching
- Redness and burning (especially during urination)
- Sex may feel painful or dry.
- Males may experience an itchy rash on the penis.

- **Testing** - Usually the health care provider can tell by examining the vagina, and also the vaginal discharge can be tested. Because some STDs can look like a yeast infection, it is important to be tested for them at the same time.

- **Treatment** - Over the counter yeast treatments usually work. It is important before starting a medication for yeast infection to be diagnosed. The treatment is usually a medicine that is placed in the vagina. Male partners of women with yeast are not usually treated but they should be checked for STDs.

More information

- Yeast information (American Social Health Association)
http://www.ashastd.org/learn/learn_vag_trich_yst.cfm
- Candidiasis information (Planned Parenthood)
<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/health-topics/womens-health/vaginitis-4305.htm>

