



## Bacterial Vaginosis

### What Is Bacterial Vaginosis?

One of the most common reasons for a woman to visit a medical clinic is vaginal discharge. This can be a sign of a sexually transmitted infection, but it can also signal the presence of an infection that has not been transmitted through sexual contact; such as a yeast infection. Bacterial vaginosis (BV) is also known as Gardnerella, Hemophilus or non-specific vaginitis. It is a common infection with symptoms such as vaginal discharge, irritation and odor. Although the bacteria may be sexually transmitted, it is not considered a sexually transmitted infection.

Bacterial vaginosis is caused by a change in the combination of bacteria in the vagina. Instead of the normal balance of bacteria, increased numbers of certain bacteria may appear, but the specific cause of this change is unknown. Bacteria such as Gardnerella vaginalis, Mycoplasma hominis and bacteroides are often found in women with bacterial vaginosis.

### How Is It Diagnosed and Treated?

The diagnosis of bacterial vaginosis is made on the basis of an examination and simple laboratory tests that can be done during a clinic visit. Women without symptoms do not usually need to be treated, even if the bacteria are present, although women experiencing symptoms usually desire treatment. Male sex partners are not usually treated because they do not experience symptoms of this infection and probably play little or no role in transmitting it.

The primary goal of treatment is to relieve the symptoms and prevent any possibility of the infection moving up into the pelvic organs. One treatment is Metronidazole, either in oral tablet form or in gel form inserted into the vagina. A vaginal preparation or oral medication course of Clindamycin may also be used to treat bacterial vaginosis. Intercourse should be avoided during the antibiotic treatment. If the signs and symptoms do not go away, or they return, call the clinic to schedule a visit.

### **If you are being treated with Metronidazole in any form, please read this important information:**

- No alcohol should be consumed during the course of treatment and for 24 hours before or after, as this may cause extreme nausea.
- If you know of, or suspect an allergy to Metronidazole, do not use this medication.