

Can I get bacterial vaginosis again?

Unfortunately bacterial vaginosis commonly comes back. Sometimes a longer course of treatment is needed to decrease the chance of it coming back.

Treating male partners (of infected women) doesn't seem to prevent bacterial vaginosis from coming back, so it's not recommended.

We recommend using condoms for at least one month after treating BV (even if you only have sex with your regular partner) as this seems to reduce the chances of BV coming back. Condoms also protect against sexually transmitted infections. Stopping smoking may help as well as using only water (not soapy products) to wash the vulva (outside area near the vagina).

Contact us

Phone 0800 739 432 Monday to Friday to book your appointment at one of the Auckland Sexual Health Clinics or visit our website www.ashs.org.nz for more information around opening hours.

Greenlane Clinical Centre
Building 7 Level 3
Greenlane West

South Auckland
12 Waddon Place
Mangere

North Shore
418 Glenfield Rd
Glenfield

West Auckland
Totara Health Level 2
1 McCrae Way
New Lynn

This fact sheet is designed to provide you with information on disease. It is not intended to replace the need for an appointment with your doctor. People are strongly advised to check with their healthcare provider about any specific questions or concerns. Every effort has been taken to ensure that the information in this pamphlet is correct at the time of publishing (2020).



Bacterial Vaginosis



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What is bacterial vaginosis?

Bacterial vaginosis (BV) is caused by an overgrowth of bacteria (bugs) that are usually found in the vagina in small numbers.

What are the symptoms of bacterial vaginosis?

Some women notice a change to their vaginal discharge (change in colour or amount or a bad smell). Some women don't notice any symptoms.

How is bacterial vaginosis diagnosed?

By doing a medical examination, a doctor or nurse can take a sample of vaginal discharge. By looking at the sample under a microscope, we can make the diagnosis of bacterial vaginosis.

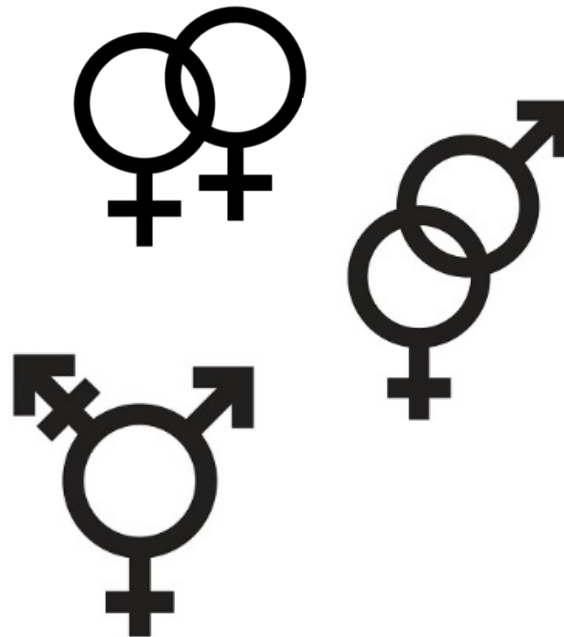
Results will be available before you leave the sexual health clinic and we might also give you treatment.

You may have other infections at the same time as bacterial vaginosis, so it is important to take other tests to rule out sexually transmitted infections .

How is bacterial vaginosis treated?

Treatment is usually with antibiotic tablets (metronidazole), taken for seven days.

Metronidazole may make you feel sick or give you an upset stomach; so it's better to take the tablets with food. Do not drink alcohol with this antibiotic or you may get a severe hangover!



How did I get bacterial vaginosis?

We don't know the exact cause of bacterial vaginosis. It's not clear if bacterial vaginosis is sexually transmitted but it is more common in women who have sex with more than one person, and it often develops after sex with a new partner.

Bacterial vaginosis is also more common in women who have sex with other women, women who use soapy water or other products to clean inside the vagina and women who smoke.

What are the risks of bacterial vaginosis?

Most women do not get any long-term problems from having bacterial vaginosis.

But sometimes it can be associated with pregnancy problems, pelvic infections and other sexually transmitted infections.