

This is a PDF document from a web page at [www.smart2ask.org](http://www.smart2ask.org). Check the original page at the website for all links- some may not work from this version. For policies and sources, visit the web address above. **Information here is kept as up to date and reliable as possible. However, you should always consult a professional health care provider.**

## Bacterial Vaginitis / Vaginosis

Information here is general in nature. You should always consult a health professional for health problems.

Vaginitis (sometimes called Yeast infection, Bacterial Vaginosis or BV, Gardnerella Vaginalis, or Trichomoniasis, which have different causes)

Vaginitis is a name for **symptoms** of swelling, burning, itching or infection of the vagina that can be caused by different bacteria, fungus or protozoa. The most common kinds of vaginitis are bacterial vaginosis (BV) and yeast, a fungus. Sometimes trichomoniasis (Slang: "trich", pronounced "trick") is called vaginitis too. Trichomoniasis is caused by a parasitic protozoa called Trichomonas vaginalis.

Vaginitis is often described by its "fishy smell". It's usually worse after having sex or during your period. It is caused by an imbalance in the healthy bacteria normally found in the vagina. It is usually harmless but if it gets out of hand, it can smell bad. And if it is not treated, sometimes it can move into the uterus and fallopian tubes where it causes a more serious infection. It may cause a miscarriage, Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID) or problems during a pregnancy such as low birth weight or premature birth. Generally a "yeast infection" is not a risk to a fetus or to the pregnancy itself. There is some indication that having Vaginosis may increase the chance of getting an HIV infection.

Often you can clear up an infection of a "yeast infection" with over the counter (non-prescription) treatment available from a drug store. However, if symptoms stay please see your doctor. The symptoms may actually be from trichomoniasis which can be sexually transmitted.

Causes and Symptoms:

The cause of Bacterial Vaginosis is not known for sure. However these things seem to at least be a factor:

Sex without a condom. It's thought that semen alters the PH chemistry in the vagina.

Douching (flushing the vagina with various liquids), or frequently using perfumed soap and/or bubble bath

Using an I.U.D. birth control device

It is known that sexually active women get it more often than those who aren't, and douching is not a good idea because it can make the imbalance of "good" vs. bad bacteria even worse. Some people believe douching will flush out the bad stuff but few if any health care professionals would say that now.

### **Symptoms: (Female)**

Greyish-white milky discharge.

Watery or foamy discharge.

Unpleasant "fishy" odour, often worse after sex. Sometimes so mild that a woman may not notice it.

This is a PDF document from a web page at [www.smart2ask.org](http://www.smart2ask.org). Check the original page at the website for all links- some may not work from this version. For policies and sources, visit the web address above. **Information here is kept as up to date and reliable as possible. However, you should always consult a professional health care provider.**

Swelling, burning or itching in the vagina

**Symptom: ( Male)**

Males seldom have any symptoms. If they do, it would be red or tender skin on the penis.

Infection is passed on by:

Bacterial Vaginosis usually not passed on from females to males. However, trichomoniasis is a sexually transmitted disease.

**Diagnosis and Treatment:**

Bacterial Vaginosis should be diagnosed by a health care worker; usually a swab is taken from your genital area. Your urine may also be tested for acidity. Bacterial Vaginosis symptoms may seem like symptoms of other things so to be treated correctly, it should be diagnosed correctly.

Antibiotics used to treat bacterial vaginosis must be prescribed. It is important to tell your doctor if you are pregnant because the prescription will be different. Antibiotics are taken by mouth, or applied to the vagina, often in a cream.