

# Bacterial Vaginosis

What it is:

Bacterial vaginosis (BV) is a condition in women in which the normal balance of bacteria in the vagina is disrupted and an overgrowth of certain bacteria occurs. It is sometimes called vaginitis or gardnerella, since gardnerella is usually the culprit bacteria in most infections. BV has some unpleasant side effects including a fishy odor, and reduced immunity. In pregnancy BV has been linked to preterm labor and miscarriage.

What causes it:

Numerous factors contribute to the development of BV. The most common include douching, which destroys the healthy vaginal flora, antibiotics which upset the natural flora balance, using IUDs, having multiple partners, poor diet, and previous vaginal infections.

What symptoms you may have:

Some women do not have any symptoms

- Fishy smell, especially after intercourse
- Milky vaginal discharge
- vaginal irritation
- Pain or sensitivity after intercourse
- Preterm cramping or contractions in pregnancy
- Alkaline urine pH



How to treat it:

Maintain a healthy diet high in protein and complex carbohydrates. Include probiotic supplementation. Avoid sugar and simple carbohydrates.

Be aware that most "yogurts" are full of sugar and have minimal healthy cultures, always choose plain yogurt. If you must sweeten it, use honey, fruit, or a small amount of jam or spread.

Encourage a healthy balance of vaginal flora with probiotics. Persistent cases may need to be treated with medication.