



LENAWEE COUNTY  
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

# Bacterial Vaginosis (BV)

1040 S. Winter St. Suite 2328

Adrian, MI 49221

Phone: (517) 264-5226

Fax: (517) 264-0790

[www.lenawehealthdepartment.org](http://www.lenawehealthdepartment.org)

## What is BV?

Bacterial vaginosis (BV) is a infection that happens when there is too much of certain bacteria in the vagina, causing an imbalance. It is not a sexually transmitted infection (STI), but it can increase your risk for getting STIs and sexually active women are most likely to get BV. BV is the most common vaginal infection in women ages 15-44. BV can be detected on pap smears, and wet mounts.

## How does BV spread?

BV occurs when the normal balance of bacteria in the vagina is disrupted. This is most likely when there are new or multiple sex partners involved. Douching, not using condoms, perfumed bubble baths, vaginal deodorants, some scented soaps, and scented toilet paper/wet wipes can throw off the natural flora of the vagina and cause BV infections. Female partners can get BV from their female partners. You cannot get BV from toilet seats, bedding, swimming pools.

## Symptoms of BV

Some women do not have symptoms, but they may include:

- A thin white or gray vaginal discharge
- A strong fish-like odor, especially after sex
- Pain, itching, or burning in the vagina
- Burning with urination
- Itching around the outside of the vagina

## Treating BV

- Metronidazole is the antibiotic most commonly used to treat BV
- It is important to take all the medication properly as prescribed even if symptoms go away sooner
- Do not share medication
- Follow-up with your healthcare provider, especially if symptoms persist

\*Not treating BV can increase your risk of getting STIs or HIV, and occasionally lead to pelvic inflammatory disease, which can make it difficult or impossible to have children

## Pregnancy and BV

Pregnant women with BV are more likely to have babies who are born prematurely (at less than 37 weeks) or with low birth weight than women who do not have BV while pregnant.

## To Prevent BV

- Abstinence from sex
- Use a condom or dental dam every time
- Have open communication with your partner(s)
- Have regular exams if you are sexually active
- Do not douche or use scented products on or in the vagina

*This FACT SHEET is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information call your health care provider or call the Lenawee County Health Department (517) 264-5226*