



## **Factsheet: Vaginitis (Bacterial Vaginosis and Thrush)**

### **What is Vaginitis?**

Vaginitis means inflammation of the vagina. It is generally caused by a fungal or bacterial infection.

The most common types of vaginitis are caused by:

- Bacterial Vaginosis (BV)
- Yeast, which is a fungus (Thrush).

Sometimes girls/women may experience itching, swelling or burning in the vagina that can be caused by different germs. This is referred to as Vaginitis. These infections are often caused by a change in the balance of 'normal' bacteria in the vagina. Certain things upset this balance such as:

- Antibiotics
- Poor diet
- Tight underwear
- Pregnancy
- Sexual intercourse
- Using perfumed soaps, sprays or shower gels around the genital area can disrupt the vagina's normal balance.

### **How is it transmitted?**

Unprotected vaginal, anal or oral sex.

*Note: Vaginitis is not always transmitted sexually. Women who are not sexually active can develop BV and thrush.*

### **Prevention**

- When sexually active, always use condoms and/or dental dams for vaginal, anal and oral sex.
- Get tested and treated, if required.
- Hygiene: wash vaginal area everyday using a mild soap.
- Wipe vagina and anus from front to back.
- Wear cotton underwear.
- Eat a healthy varied diet.
- Don't use perfumed soaps, sprays or shower gels around the genital area.



### **Bacterial Vaginosis (BV)**

#### **What are the symptoms?**

A person can have BV and not have any symptoms. If symptoms do occur they can include:

- Strong fishy smell.
- Whitish/greyish discharge.
- Foamy or watery discharge.

#### **How is it diagnosed?**

- Physical examination of the genitals.
- A swab from the infected area.

#### **How is it treated?**

- BV can be treated and cured with specific antibiotics.

BV can return (in about 20% of cases), especially after a period or after sex.

### **Thrush (Yeast Infection)**

#### **What are the symptoms?**

A person can have thrush and not have any symptoms. If symptoms do occur they can include:

- Thick white 'cottage cheese' discharge.
- Pain, itching, burning or redness around the vagina.

#### **How is it diagnosed?**

- Physical examination of the genitals.
- A swab from the infected area.

#### **How is it treated?**

- (Over the counter) anti-fungal creams or vaginal pessaries.
- Prescribed anti-fungal medication.
- Although thrush is not always transmitted sexually, it can be passed on sexually, therefore any sexual partners may need to be treated also.

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