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.

*************************

Join the Just Carry One Campaign and promote safer sex:  
[www.facebook.com/justcarryone](http://www.facebook.com/justcarryone)

*************************

[www.hivireland.ie](http://www.hivireland.ie)