



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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