




# Bacterial Vaginosis

## A Common Type of Vaginal Infection



**Vaginitis** (vaj-uh-nahy-tis) is an infection or inflammation of the vagina.

**Bacterial vaginosis** (vaj-uh-no-sis) is one of three most common types of vaginitis.

Women infected with bacterial vaginosis are at greater risk of getting HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). In pregnant women, it may also lead to premature birth and babies born with a low birth weight.

### What are the signs?

Vaginitis may cause:

- Vaginal itching or irritation
- Unusual discharge (fluids) from the vagina that has a bad odor

Many women have no signs and only find out they have it during an annual exam by their gynecologist.

It's important to see your gynecologist once a year.

### What causes bacterial vaginosis?

It is caused by too much bacteria growing in the vagina. The bacteria can spread during sex.

### Who is at higher risk?

- Women with new or many sex partners
- Women who use an intrauterine device (IUD) for birth control
- Women who use products (e.g., douches) to clean the vagina

### What to do if you have bacterial vaginosis?

Your doctor will prescribe some medicine and tell you what to do.

**Here are some tips that can help prevent it from coming back and relieve some of the discomfort:**

- Avoid baths, hot tubs and whirlpool spas.
- Rinse your outer genital area with clean water, and dry the area well.
- Wipe from front to back after using the toilet.
- Don't use harsh soaps, scented tampons and pads.
- Don't use douches or other products to clean your vagina.
- Use a male condom while having sex.
- Wear cotton underwear.
- Eat yogurt to raise lactosbacilli (a type of good bacteria) in your body.