



Unneed2know
sexually transmitted infections

STI Information Sheet **Gardnerella**

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Gardnerella



What is Gardnerella?

Gardnerella also known as Bacterial vaginosis (BV) is a common cause of unusual vaginal discharge. BV is not a sexually transmitted infection (STI), but it can increase your risk of getting an STI such as chlamydia.

How do you get Gardnerella?

Bacterial vaginosis is caused by a change in the natural balance of bacteria in your vagina. What causes this to happen is not fully known, but you're more likely to get it if:

- You're sexually active (but women who have not had sex can also get BV).
- You have had a change of partner.
- You have an IUD (contraception device).
- You use perfumed products in or around your vagina.
- BV is not an STI, even though it can be triggered by sex.
- A woman can pass it to another woman during sex.
- You're more likely to get an STI if you have BV. This may be because BV makes your vagina less acidic and reduces your natural defences against infection.
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Symptoms

The most common symptom of bacterial vaginosis is unusual vaginal discharge that has a strong fishy smell, particularly after sex.

You may notice a change to the colour and consistency of your discharge, such as becoming greyish-white and thin and watery.



But 50% of women with bacterial vaginosis do not have any symptoms.

Bacterial vaginosis does not usually cause any soreness or itching.

If you're unsure it's BV, check for other causes of unusual vaginal discharge.

Treatment

Bacterial vaginosis is usually treated with antibiotic tablets or gels or creams. If you have a same-sex partner, they may also need treatment.



Preventing Gardnerella



- ✓ **Keeping your vaginal bacteria balanced.** Use warm water only to clean the outside of your vagina. You do not need to use soap. Even mild soap can cause irritate your vagina. Always wipe front to back from your vagina to your anus. Keep the area cool by wearing cotton or cotton-lined underpants.
- ✓ **Not douching.** Douching upsets the balance of good and harmful bacteria in your vagina. This may raise your risk of BV. It may also make it easier to get BV again after treatment. Doctors do not recommend douching.
- ✓ **Not having sex.** Researchers are still studying how women get BV. You can get BV without having sex, but BV is more common in women who have sex.
- ✓ **Limiting your number of sex partners.** Researchers think that your risk of getting BV goes up with the number of partners you have.

Source – <https://www.womenshealth.gov/>