

Bacterial Vaginosis

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Overview

Bacterial vaginosis is a vaginal infection that causes a foul-smelling vaginal discharge.

Certain bacteria cause an imbalance in the normal bacterial count of the vagina leading to a watery grey or white abnormal discharge.

Is it a form of sexually transmitted disease (STD)?

Bacterial vaginosis is not a sexually transmitted disease and cannot be transmitted from having sex with men. Women who have it are at a higher risk of catching other infections from their partner during sex. Homosexual relations between women might cause them to pass bacterial vaginosis to their sex partners.

What are the symptoms of bacterial vaginosis?

Most women have no symptoms. For women who have symptoms, a "fishy-smelling" vaginal discharge is observed. A burning feeling in the vagina may also be felt.

How is it diagnosed?

Bacterial vaginosis can be identified using a vaginal swab. A sample of the vaginal discharge will be taken to the laboratory to perform confirmatory tests.

Are there complications attached to bacterial vaginosis?

Bacterial vaginosis causes no harm to most women, but the discharges may be uncomfortable and unpleasant. Bacterial vaginosis may have an adverse effect on pregnant women if left untreated. Pregnant women with this disease are slightly at a higher risk for premature labor, preterm birth, miscarriage and having a child with low birthweight.

What treatment is available for bacterial vaginosis?

Antibiotics may be prescribed to treat bacterial vaginosis to get rid of the symptoms. For cases with mild symptoms, the disease may gradually clear on its own. Pregnant women, however, may need some treatment since they are at a higher risk of complications.