

Cervical Screening



A simple test that could save your life



The Cervical Screening Test looks for HPV, the virus which can cause cervical cancer.

If you have a cervix, are between 25 and 74 and have ever been sexually active you should get tested.

Even if you have not been sexually active recently, or have been in a long term monogamous relationship, HPV can be dormant and become active again so testing is still important.

This includes women who are same sex attracted and people who identify as transgender.

Make an appointment with one of our experienced nurses today 6247 3077
SHFPACT.ORG.AU



SHFPACT Clinical Services

- Contraceptive Advice, Information & Services
- IUD's and other Long Acting Contraceptive Options
- Cervical Screening
- Canberra Menopause Centre
- Pregnancy Options Counselling
- Sexually Transmissible Infections (STIs):
- Testing, Treatment and Advice
- Blood borne virus and HIV testing
- Emergency Contraception (the 'Morning After' Pill)
- Breast Checks and Breast Awareness Education
- Fertility Issues and Pre-conception Advice
- Sexual Difficulties and Sexuality Education
- PrEP Information, Advice, and Prescription

References: Australian STI Management Guidelines for use in primary care.
<https://sti.guidelines.org.au/sexually-transmissible-infections/bacterial-vaginosis/>
Stay STI Free. Victorian Sexual Health Network. Bacterial vaginosis - STI Testing and Prevention - Stay STI Free

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Bacterial Vaginosis

Bacterial vaginosis (BV) is a common infection of the vagina and is the most common cause of abnormal vaginal discharge.

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What is bacterial vaginosis?

Bacterial vaginosis (BV) is a common infection of the vagina and is the most common cause of abnormal vaginal discharge.

Up to 1 in 3 people with a vagina will have BV at some time in their life.

Bacteria that cause BV can also be carried on the penis.

What causes BV?

BV is caused by an imbalance in the bacteria that is naturally found in the vagina.

Healthy vaginas usually have high numbers of a bacteria called lactobacilli that protect the vagina and keep it healthy.

When BV occurs, lactobacilli is replaced by BV causing bacteria.

BV is more common:

- If you have had a new sexual partner
- If you have sexual partners with a vagina
- If you are having unprotected penile-vaginal sex (without condoms)
- If you are vaginal douching
- If you have an intrauterine device (IUD) particularly a copper IUD

How do you get BV?

BV usually only affects people who are sexually active. The organisms that cause BV are transmitted through sexual intercourse. They can be carried on the penis and transmitted during penile-vaginal sex.

What are the symptoms?

Up to half of people with bacterial vaginosis will not have any symptoms.

However, if you do get symptoms, they can include:

- increased or changed vaginal discharge (often white or grey watery)
- a vaginal odour change (usually slightly offensive or 'fishy' and may be more noticeable after sex)
- vulval itching or irritation

How do you diagnose BV?

BV is diagnosed based on symptoms and a vaginal examination. A vaginal swab is also usually collected.

Do I need treatment?

In up to one-third of cases, BV goes away by itself without treatment.

However, treatment is recommended in the following circumstances:

- To relieve symptoms that don't go away
- If you are having a gynaecological procedure
- If you are pregnant

What is the treatment?

The treatment for BV is antibiotics. These antibiotics restore normal balance in the vagina. Antibiotic treatment can be oral tablets, vaginal creams, or vaginal gels. Please discuss your preferred method of treatment with your doctor.

If BV keeps recurring after treatment your doctor may recommend an extended treatment over a 4-month period.

Are there any side effects from BV treatment?

Most people tolerate the treatment well. However, some people may experience some side effects from the oral antibiotics, such as abdominal pain, cramps, nausea & vomiting, flushing, or headache.

The oral antibiotics can interact with alcohol, so you need to avoid alcohol during treatment and for up to 3 days afterwards.

The vaginal treatment preparations weaken latex condoms, so abstaining from sex or using a non-latex condom during treatment is important.

Does my sexual partner need treatment?

If you have a regular sexual partner with a penis, it is recommended that they are treated at the same time as you. This is shown to reduce recurrence. Discuss this with your doctor.

What happens if BV is not treated?

BV is a very common condition. Most of the time there are no problems if it is not treated, and treatment is not usually advised if you have no symptoms.

However, there are situations where complications can occur so treatment will be recommended. This includes:

- If you have BV when you are pregnant, you may be at higher risk of having problems in pregnancy and immediately after birth.
- If you undergo a gynaecological procedure when you have BV, you are at greater risk of developing a pelvic infection afterwards.
- If you have untreated BV, it may increase your risk of contracting a sexually transmissible infection or HIV.

Can BV recur?

While treatment is very effective, BV can recur. About a third of people who are treated will have another episode of BV within three months and more than half will have a recurrence within a year.

Reducing your risk of BV recurring

- If you have a regular partner with a penis treating them at same time is shown to reduce recurrence.
- Avoiding anything that changes the balance of vaginal bacteria may also help reduce recurrences. This includes:
 - Good vulval care: using warm water only to wash the vulval and vaginal area and avoiding using scented soap, shower gels, perfumed bubble baths, and commercial 'feminine hygiene' products such as sprays, vaginal deodorants, washes, or wipes.
 - Avoiding douching.

