WHAT IS BV?

Bacterial Vaginosis (BV) is a condition in which there is an overgrowth of bacteria in the vagina. BV is common among women of childbearing age.

HOW DO WOMEN GET BV?

Doctors don’t fully understand how people get BV. However, you are at higher risk if you:

• Have a new sex partner or multiple sex partners.
• You Douche.
• You Smoke.

You cannot get BV from toilet seats, bedding, swimming pools, or touching objects around you.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

• A strong, fishy smell, especially after sex.
• White or gray vaginal discharge.
• Watery or foamy discharge.

Many women experience no symptoms.

WHEN SHOULD I BE TESTED?

You should be tested for BV if you have any of the symptoms listed above.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT IF I HAVE BV?

A health care provider must examine you and take a sample of fluid from your vagina.

WHAT IF I’M PREGNANT?

If you are pregnant and have BV you are more likely to:

• Give birth prematurely
• Have a miscarriage
• Have a baby who is underweight (less than 5 lbs at birth).

HOW IS BV TREATED?

BV can be treated and cured with antibiotics. If you are treated with metronidazole or tinidazole, avoid all alcohol use including over-the-counter medicines that contain alcohol (such as cough medicine). Mixing alcohol with these drugs can cause severe nausea and vomiting. If you are treated with clindamycin cream or ovules, the oil in these products can weaken latex. This means condoms or diaphragms may break and you may not be protected from STIs or pregnancy.

Remember:

• You must finish all medicine prescribed to you.
• Do not share your medicine with anyone.
• If you still have symptoms after treatment, consult your health care provider.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM NOT TREATED?

• You may have a higher risk of getting another STI.
• You may have a higher risk of contracting HIV.

CAN I GET BV AGAIN AFTER TREATMENT?

Yes, you can get BV again.

WHAT DOES BV MEAN FOR PARTNER(S)?

Male partners do not need to be treated for BV, but BV may spread between women who have sex with women. If you have BV and a female sex partner, your partner may have BV, too.

HOW CAN I LOWER MY RISK?

Having a new sex partner or having more than one sex partner may increase your chances of developing BV. To lower your risk:

• If you decide to be sexually active, limit the number of partners you have.
• Do not douche.
• Washing the genitals, urinating, or douching after sex will not prevent BV or any other sexually transmitted infection.

Learn how you can protect your health at: www.adagiohealth.org