

# BACTERIAL VAGINOSIS

Bacterial Vaginosis (BV) is very common in women.

BV occurs when there is an overgrowth of some of the bacteria which are normally present in the vagina of a healthy woman.

## Symptoms

Not all women have obvious symptoms. Symptoms come and go in about one third of women.

If symptoms are present, there is usually a fishy odour and often an increase in vaginal discharge. These symptoms are more noticeable after menstruation (a period) or intercourse. Reddening and irritation around the genital area may also occur.

## Transmission

BV is not a sexually transmissible infection, nor is it an indication of poor hygiene. However, the female partners of women with BV are more likely to have BV.

## Diagnosis

BV is diagnosed by an examination of the woman and testing of a vaginal swab.

## Treatment

BV is treated, either with oral tablets or a vaginal cream. Screening and treatment for BV may be necessary before undergoing certain gynaecological procedures, such as insertion of an intrauterine contraceptive device (IUCD) or gynaecological surgery.

The usual medications used to treat BV are Metronidazole or Clindamycin. Women should avoid alcohol during treatment and for 72 hours after these treatments finish.

## Partners

Male partners do not need to be treated.

Female partners of women with BV may need treatment.

## Complications

- late miscarriage of pregnancy;
- pre-term birth;
- pre-term rupture of the membranes; and
- post delivery infections.

## Factors which can trigger onset of BV

- new or multiple sexual partners;
- vaginal douching or washing;

- use of an intrauterine contraceptive device; and
- young age at first sexual intercourse.

Recurrence of BV occurs in about one third of women.

*Sexual Health Service Tasmania is staffed Monday to Friday from 8.30 am until 5.00 pm. Clinic times vary from site to site so please contact your local office for details (see contact details on the back of this pamphlet).*

**Sexual Health Service  
Clinical Services**

**HOBART**

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Hobart 7000  
Ph: (03) 6233 3557

**LAUNCESTON**

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Launceston 7250  
Ph: (03) 6336 2216

**DEVONPORT**

23 Steele Street  
Devonport 7310  
Ph: (03) 6421 7759

**BURNIE**

11 Jones Street  
BURNIE 7320  
Ph: (03) 6434 6315

**SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICE  
A joint Australian and State  
Government Program**

*The Royal Hobart Hospital is Tasmania's largest hospital and provides a number of state-wide services including cardiothoracic surgery, neurosurgery, burns management, hyperbaric and diving medicine, neonatal intensive care and high-risk obstetrics. It is the major teaching and research hospital for the State and works closely with the University of Tasmania.*

*Many students in the health care professions are taught within the Hospital, and gaining skills in examining and interviewing patients is an important part of their education and training. We ask for your co-operation and encourage you to participate in our teaching and research activities. Your permission is required for participation.*

The Royal Hobart Hospital encourages feedback from patients, relatives and visitors. This feedback helps staff to better understand the needs of patients and provide the best possible patient care.



**The Royal Hobart Hospital  
is a smoke-free site**

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**Information  
Pamphlet**

Sexual  
Health  
SERVICE

**Bacterial  
Vaginosis**