

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.

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EXPERIENCED NURSES TODAY 6247 3077
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OPENING HOURS

Please contact our reception staff on 02 6247 3077 or visit shfpact.org.au for SHFPACT clinic hours

LOCATION

SHFPACT is conveniently located in the city.

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All donations to SHFPACT over \$2.00 are tax deductible

SHFPACT CLINICAL SERVICES

- Contraceptive advice, information and services
- IUDs and other long acting contraceptive options
- Cervical screening
- Canberra Menopause Centre
- Unplanned Pregnancy Counselling Service
- 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 prescriptions

SHFPACT is a health promotion charity (HPC) assisted with funding from the ACT Government.



Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT
Level 1, 28 University Ave, Canberra City
Call 02 6247 3077

shfpact.org.au

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I'M ALL ABOUT
BACTERIAL VAGINOSIS



What is bacterial vaginosis?

Bacterial vaginosis (BV) is the most common cause of abnormal vaginal discharge. One in ten people with a vagina will have BV at some time in their life

What causes BV?

BV is caused by an imbalance in the bacteria that is naturally found in the vagina. It is not really understood why this happens.

Is BV a sexually transmissible infection?

BV is not a sexually transmissible infection although it is associated with sex. We know that having a new sexual partner or multiple sexual partners can increase the risk of BV. Using condoms can help to reduce this risk.

What are the symptoms?

Up to half of people with bacterial vaginosis will not have any symptoms. However, if symptoms do occur, 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 is it diagnosed?

BV is diagnosed based on symptoms and an 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 with your doctor.

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.

You need to avoid alcohol during treatment and for up to 3 days afterward. The vaginal preparations weaken latex condoms, so abstaining from sex or using a non-latex condom is advised during treatment.

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 advised. 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 and 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.

How can I reduce BV recurring?

We do not know how to prevent BV. However, avoiding anything that changes the balance of vaginal bacteria may help reduce recurrences.

This includes good vulval care. Good vulval care involves 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. Using condoms also reduces your risk of developing BV.

References:

Australian STI Management Guidelines for use in primary care. Melbourne Sexual Health Centre.