

Where to go

Confidential tests and treatment are available from:

(Most of these services are free. Please telephone first to see if you need an appointment.)

Your GP or a doctor of your choice or Fremantle Hospital Infectious Diseases, B2 Clinic, FREMANTLE (08) 9431 2149	Royal Perth Hospital Sexual Health Clinic PERTH (08) 9224 2178
FPWA-Sexual Health Services, NORTHBRIDGE (08) 9227 6177 or 1800 198 205 toll free	Women's Health Services NORTHBRIDGE (09) 9227 8122 or 1800 998 399 toll free
Quarry Health Centre (For under 25's) FREMANTLE (08) 9430 4544	Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service, PERTH (08) 9421 3888

And some regional Population Health Units and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

HealthInfo 1300 135 030
www.population.health.wa.gov.au

Communicable Disease Control Directorate
Department of Health (08) 9388 4999

Regional Population Health Units
(those in bold provide clinical services)

Albany	(08) 9842 7500
Broome	(08) 9194 1630
Bunbury	(08) 9781 2350
Carnarvon	(08) 9941 0560
Geraldton	(08) 9956 1985
Kalgoorlie-Boulder	(08) 9080 8200
Northam	(08) 9622 4320
South Hedland	(08) 9172 8333



Sexual Health and Blood-borne Virus Program
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Delivering a Healthy WA

BACTERIAL VAGINOSIS
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Your
sexual
health

What is bacterial vaginosis?

Many bacteria live in the vagina and rarely cause any problems. Bacterial vaginosis is caused when there are too many of one kind of bacteria, mainly *Gardnerella*. It's normally harmless, but can lead to unpleasant symptoms or problems with pregnancy.

How do you get bacterial vaginosis?

You can get bacterial vaginosis without sexual contact, but it is often linked with sexual activity.

Signs and symptoms

A grey discharge from the vagina with a fishy or musty smell. The smell can get stronger after sex or during your period.

Some women can have bacterial vaginosis but have no symptoms at all.

Bacterial vaginosis is usually harmless and often goes away by itself. However, if you are pregnant, bacterial vaginosis can cause early labour, so see your doctor.

Bacterial vaginosis may cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), which can lead to infertility (so you can't have a baby).

Checking it out

Your doctor will check your vagina for discharge. The doctor will test the discharge for bacterial vaginosis. She may send a sample to a laboratory for more tests because the signs of bacterial vaginosis can be similar to other infections, such as chlamydia or other sexually transmitted infections. Some of these infections are more serious and/or need a different treatment - for example, the treatment for bacterial vaginosis will not cure chlamydia.

Protecting yourself

After going to the toilet, always wipe gently, from the front to the back, to stop bacteria from getting into the vagina.

Using pads instead of tampons can help, because tampons can change the normal balance of vaginal bacteria.

If you need treatment, bacterial vaginosis is usually treated with antibiotics. You should take these with food. Avoid alcohol during the treatment and for 3 days afterwards as it can affect the antibiotics and make you vomit. Make sure you take all the medicine.

If you're pregnant, you may need to see a specialist.

Your sex partner doesn't usually need treatment if you have bacterial vaginosis.