

## DOCTOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

# Managing Bacterial Vaginosis

If you've been diagnosed with bacterial vaginosis, talking with your doctor is an important way to address your concerns and take control of your reproductive health. Asking the right questions during your conversation will help you know what to expect and how to better navigate your condition. Familiarize yourself with these common terms before your appointment to help facilitate your discussion.

## Vocabulary to Know

Your doctor might mention these common terms. Here's what they mean.

<b>Antibiotics</b>	Antibiotics treat all types of infections, including fungal, viral, and bacterial. Antibiotics are a main line therapy for BV.
<b>Douching</b>	Washing or cleaning the vagina with water and other fluids. Doctors tell women not to douche because douching has been connected to many health problems, including BV. Regular douching changes the bacterial balance in the vagina and may lead to the overgrowth of harmful bacteria.
<b><i>Gardnerella</i> Bacteria</b>	It is believed most infections of the vagina start with <i>Gardnerella</i> bacteria. <i>Gardnerella</i> causes disruption in the normal bacteria balance.
<b>Gram Stain</b>	A test that classifies bacteria as either Gram-positive or Gram-negative. A Gram stain result can confirm or rule out BV.
<b><i>Lactobacillus</i> Bacteria</b>	<i>Lactobacillus</i> are good bacteria that live in the digestive, urinary, and genital systems. BV can occur when there is not enough of this good bacteria.
<b>Pelvic Exam</b>	During a pelvis exam, a gynecologist examines the vagina for signs of infection. He or she will also check the pelvic organs (uterus, ovaries, cervix, bladder, vagina, etc.) for signs of disease.
<b><i>Mobiluncus</i> Bacteria</b>	Bacteria found in both the vagina and bowel. Women who have high levels of <i>Mobiluncus</i> may get BV frequently.
<b>Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID)</b>	An infection of the organs in the female reproductive system, including the uterus, ovaries, cervix, and fallopian tubes. PID is a complication of BV. When the pH in the vagina is high, PID can form, which means the longer a woman has BV, the higher risk she has for PID.
<b>Vaginal Discharge</b>	The main symptom of BV. Vaginal discharge is common and normal. Most of the time, it doesn't indicate a problem, but if it is persistent or causes discomfort or odor, it should be checked out. Discharge with BV smells fishy, especially after sexual intercourse. It may also be watery and a grayish color.
<b>Vaginal pH</b>	Normal vaginal pH ranges between 3.8 and 4.5. This acidity keeps the vagina healthy. To check for pH, a gynecologist will place a pH test strip in vagina. A vaginal pH of 4.5 or more is a sign that a woman has BV.



