For additional information on Vaginitis in Indiana, please visit: http://www.in.gov/isdh/17716.htm

What is vaginitis?

Vaginitis is characterized by inflammation of the vagina that can result in discharge, itching, and pain. Bacterial vaginosis is the most common cause of vaginal symptoms among women ages 15 – 44 years. 84% of women who have bacterial vaginosis reported no symptoms. Researchers do not know the cause of bacterial vaginitis or how some women get the infection, but it typically occurs in women who are sexually active.

Transmission

Bacterial vaginosis is most common in women aged 15 – 44 years. Bacterial vaginosis is linked to an imbalance of “good” and “harmful” bacteria that are normally found in a woman’s vagina:

- Bacterial vaginosis rarely affects women who have never had sex.
- Having bacterial vaginosis increases your chances of getting other STDs.
- You cannot get bacterial vaginosis from toilet seats, bedding or swimming pools.

Steps to lower risk of transmission:
- Not having sex
- Limiting the number of sexual partners
- Not douching

Prevalence

Bacterial vaginosis was estimated to have affected roughly 21.2 million, or 29.2% of women aged 14 – 49 years from 2001 to 2004.

National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (2001 – 2004) found that:
- 84% of women with bacterial vaginosis had no symptoms.
- Women who have not had vaginal, oral or anal sex can still be affected by bacterial vaginosis.
- Risk of bacterial vaginosis increases based on number of sexual partners.
- Non-white women have higher rates of bacterial vaginosis than white women.

Treatment

Vaginitis will sometimes go away without any treatment, but if you have symptoms you should be checked and treated by a physician. Bacterial vaginosis can be treated with antibiotics but may recur even after treatment.

If left untreated, bacterial vaginosis can cause health risks including:
- Increased chance of getting HIV
- Premature birth of baby
- Increased chance of getting other STDs, such as Chlamydia and gonorrhea
- Can sometimes cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), which can make it difficult to have children

Pregnant women

Pregnant women can get bacterial vaginosis. Pregnant women with bacterial vaginosis are more likely to have a baby who is born prematurely or with low birth weight compared to pregnant women who do not have bacterial vaginosis. This makes it especially important for pregnant women to be treated with antibiotics for vaginosis.

Fast facts

- Bacterial vaginosis is caused when too much of certain bacteria change the normal balance of bacteria in the vagina.
- Vaginitis is characterized by inflammation of the vagina that can result in discharge, itching and pain.
- Vaginosis can have serious health risks if left untreated, especially putting you at risk of contracting other STDs.
- Women who are pregnant and have bacterial vaginosis are at an increased risk of having a premature delivery or a low birth weight baby.

References