

Bacterial Vaginosis (BV)

This imbalance can be annoyingly recurrent for some women. It is characterized by a unique and offensive odor commonly described as “fishy” or “sour”. The smell is worse right after sex if no condom is used.

The vaginal fluid is often thinner, less viscous. Under microscopic evaluation there are specific cellular changes that are diagnostic. The vaginal PH is elevated—this is the basis of some over the counter diagnostic tests. But my thought is, if there is that unique odor, you probably have BV.

Causes

This is unknown. BV reflects an imbalance in the vagina with bacterial overgrowth and inadequate lactobacilli. Having seminal fluid in the vagina makes it worse, as the seminal fluid is alkaline (higher PH) which brings out the smell and encourages the imbalance. Blood is also alkaline so you period can exacerbate BV.

Treatment

Left untreated BV goes away on it's own 30% of the time. There are prescription products which are antibiotic based (oral pills or vaginal creams) which restore bacterial balance. Or you can use BUFFERED or Ester vitamin C 500-1000mg (regular Vit. C will BURN) inserted vaginally one at night for 1-5 nights (experiment, sometimes if it is mild one night will treat.) You will get a watery discharge each day following treatment, so wear a pad.

I am also a believer in antibacterial soap use EXTERNALLY (NEVER put soap in the vagina). Using soap where you have pubic hair and especially around the anal area I believe helps prevent recurrence. I do not recommend douching as it alters the natural flora of the vagina. Drying your external genital area with a blow dryer after showering also will help rid yourself of any unwanted bacteria on your skin which might find it's way inside and create problems.

If you are having recurrence problems, using one Vit. C after sex can be helpful. Equally using it for one night after your menses can quash a recurrence. However, none of these treatments restores your healthy vaginal bacteria balance, hence recurrence. The restoration of normal vaginal flora has been a serious challenge. There are various products that aspire to do this—but I have not been very impressed with any of them. Perhaps someday.....