

# KEEP *her* AWESOME

## DO YOU HAVE BV? HERE'S WHAT TO DO (AND WHAT NOT TO)

Bacterial vaginosis (BV for short) is a vaginal infection that affects over 21 million women in the U.S. each year.<sup>1</sup>

BV can be a real bummer, but it's not uncommon. These dos and don'ts can help make treating it easier.

### DOs



#### Stick to your prescribed treatment

Stay on your medicine—oral, cream, or gel—for as long as your healthcare provider prescribes it. Stopping treatment can increase the risk of BV returning.<sup>2</sup>



#### Learn about BV and other vaginal infections

Understanding the symptoms, causes, and treatments of BV and other vaginal infections can help arm you in the future. Visit [keeperawesome.com](http://keeperawesome.com) to brush up on the facts!



#### Wear cotton underwear

It's best to wear all-cotton underwear. Underwear made of less breathable material can trap moisture and throw off your vagina's natural balance. That can lead to infections, mainly BV.<sup>3</sup>



#### Ask anything

Take charge of your vaginal health. Ask your healthcare provider anything. It's their job to help—and they want to!

#### REMEMBER TO ASK

1. What causes BV?
2. Is BV an STI?
3. Is BV contagious?



#### Add probiotic-rich food to your diet

Yogurt is naturally rich in live and active cultures, as are some other fermented dairy foods. What are live and active cultures? Basically, these are good bacteria that may perform a beneficial function in your body. There is some evidence to suggest that eating probiotic foods can support your vaginal health.<sup>4</sup>

# DON'Ts



## Avoid vaginal douches and scented soaps

DO NOT douche. The vagina has its own natural bacterial balance that you shouldn't disturb. Plus, researchers have associated BV with vaginal douching and using scented soaps.<sup>4</sup>



## Avoid smoking

Besides everything else you may have heard about smoking, you should know that smoking is associated with a higher risk of BV, too.<sup>14</sup>



## Don't have sex for a while

Unfortunately, semen can alter pH levels in your vagina and disturb your natural bacterial balance, which may contribute to infection.<sup>5</sup> Press pause until you're done with your treatment.



## Don't try home remedies like putting garlic in your vagina

Old-school tricks may make symptoms disappear for a short while, but can also cause BV to come back.<sup>6</sup> Eat nutritious foods, but don't put them in your vagina.



## Don't use over-the-counter medicines

Over 70% of women attempt to self-treat what they believe to be a yeast infection, which in fact is often BV.<sup>7</sup> When you take matters into your own hands you may target the wrong infection. Stick to a professional diagnosis and prescription.

Now that we've covered essential dos & don'ts, this checklist can help you prevent BV or keep it from coming back in the future:

### ☐ **USE CONDOMS**

Consistently using condoms can decrease the risk of BV and protect your vagina's acidic pH.<sup>5</sup> If you're allergic to latex, look for a latex-free brand.<sup>8</sup>

### ☐ **DO NOT DOUCHE**

The vagina keeps itself clean with natural excretions. Don't try to help Mother Nature along with douching, since it could throw off your natural balance.<sup>4</sup>

### ☐ **FEMALE PARTNER? GET HER CHECKED TOO**

If you have a female partner, she may need to visit a healthcare provider, too. Male partners can't contract BV.<sup>4</sup>

### ☐ **SENSE SOMETHING? SAY SOMETHING.**

Talk to a healthcare provider. With the right diagnosis and treatment, BV is treatable.

### ☐ **KEEP SEX TOYS CLEAN**

Always wash sex toys carefully according to their instructions. Do not vaginally insert a sex toy that has been used in the anus without thoroughly washing it.<sup>8</sup>

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Visit [keeperawesome.com](https://keeperawesome.com) for additional resources and information about BV.

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