

Bacterial Vaginosis

We now have the results of your recent vaginal swab tests.

The only abnormality identified is a condition called bacterial vaginosis (BV).

BV is very common and causes a vaginal discharge, often with a noticeable smell. BV is NOT a sexually transmitted infection. It is caused by an overgrowth of NORMAL bacteria in the vagina. BV can affect any woman, including those who do not have (or who have never had) sex.

The main symptom of BV is a vaginal discharge. BV is one of the most common causes of vaginal discharge in women of childbearing age. The discharge is often white-grey in colour, and often has a fishy smell. The discharge does not usually cause itch or soreness around the vagina and vulva.

Many women with BV do not have any symptoms (up to half of cases). BV may be found by chance when vaginal swabs are taken for other reasons.

BV is usually treated with an antibiotic called metronidazole. This treatment can be taken as a tablet, or by applying a gel into the vagina. It clears BV in most cases. It is important not take any alcohol when you are on these antibiotics as the combination can cause vomiting and flushing.

If you are pregnant and have a positive BV infection it is even more important we treat your infection as it can cause complications during labour if left untreated. If you are breastfeeding then do not use these tablets, instead contact the surgery.

The doctor has issued a prescription for metronidazole. If you are registered for electronic prescribing the prescription will automatically go to your nominated pharmacy. If you are not registered for electronic prescribing the prescription will be waiting for you to collect from your usual Ridge surgery. Read the leaflet that comes with the treatment for a full list of possible side-effects and cautions. Please let us know if you think you may be allergic to this treatment before using it.

More information can be found of the NHS Choices website at www.nhs.uk.