

## Thrush and BV are very common health problems.

BV stands for bacterial vaginosis.

You cannot get thrush and BV through sex. However sometimes having sex makes the symptoms worse.

Women can get BV.

Both men and women can just get thrush.

BV is caused by changes to the natural balance of bacteria in a woman's vagina.

Thrush is caused by a kind of yeast. This is something that lives harmlessly on everyone's skin and inside the body. Usually the yeast causes no problems but it can develop and give thrush.

Thrush and BV are easy to test for and can be treated with a course of tablets, pessaries (medicine that can be put in the vagina) or cream.

## Thrush and BV and women

Some women who have thrush or BV will not have any signs or symptoms and will not need treatment unless they are pregnant and have BV. But if you have BV you may get:

- an unusual thin discharge from your vagina that can be white or grey and can smell fishy, especially after sex

If you have thrush you may get:

- itchiness or soreness around the vagina
- a thick white discharge from the vagina
- pain when you pass urine
- pain when having sex

## Thrush and men

Some men who have thrush may not have any signs or symptoms. But if you have thrush you may get:

- itchiness or soreness on the end of your penis
- red patches on the end of your penis
- a thick cheesy discharge under your foreskin
- difficulty pulling back your foreskin

## Women can get BV from:

- Using soap, bubble bath or antiseptics like savlon
  - washing inside the vagina, even just with water, or using vaginal deodorants
  - some washing powders on underwear
  - transferring bacteria from their anus to their vagina when wiping themselves
- To avoid this its best to wipe from front to back

## The yeast on your body can develop and give you thrush:


- through wearing tight pants, shorts or trousers
- when you are pregnant
- from some tablets (antibiotics)
- from soap or bubble bath

If you get thrush or BV more than once, it may be because of the soap or detergents you are using. Or because you are washing inside your vagina.

## How do you protect yourself against sexually transmitted infections?

Condoms can protect you from most sexually transmitted infections and help avoid pregnancy.

When you use a condom remember to:

- not use a condom that is past its 'use by' date, which is written on the packet
- only use condoms that have this on the side  sex
- use a new condom each time you have sex
- put a condom on before your genitals (penis and vagina) touch

Condoms come in all shapes and sizes, so find the best one for you. You can get more than one sexually transmitted infection at the same time.



# You need to know ALL about Thrush & BV

## If you think you have thrush or BV

You can go to a sexual health clinic for a check up. You can ring for an appointment or sometimes drop in. At the clinic they will examine you. If you have thrush or BV you will be given a course of tablets or cream which will get rid of it.

For name and addresses of sexual health clinics you can call:

**Sexwise** 0800 28 29 30  
**Sexual Health Information Line** 0800 567 123  
**NHS Direct** 0845 4647

Or check out the websites:

[www.ruthinking.co.uk](http://www.ruthinking.co.uk) or  
[www.playingsafely.co.uk](http://www.playingsafely.co.uk)

Sexual health clinics are confidential, so staff cannot tell anyone you have visited the clinic without your permission unless they believe you or someone else is in serious danger.

Try telling your boyfriend or girlfriend if you think you have thrush or BV. It may help for you both to go to a clinic to get checked out.

**All tests and treatment at sexual health clinics are free.**

## Questions you should ask at the clinic

When you visit a clinic or your GP for a check up ask the doctor or nurse these questions.

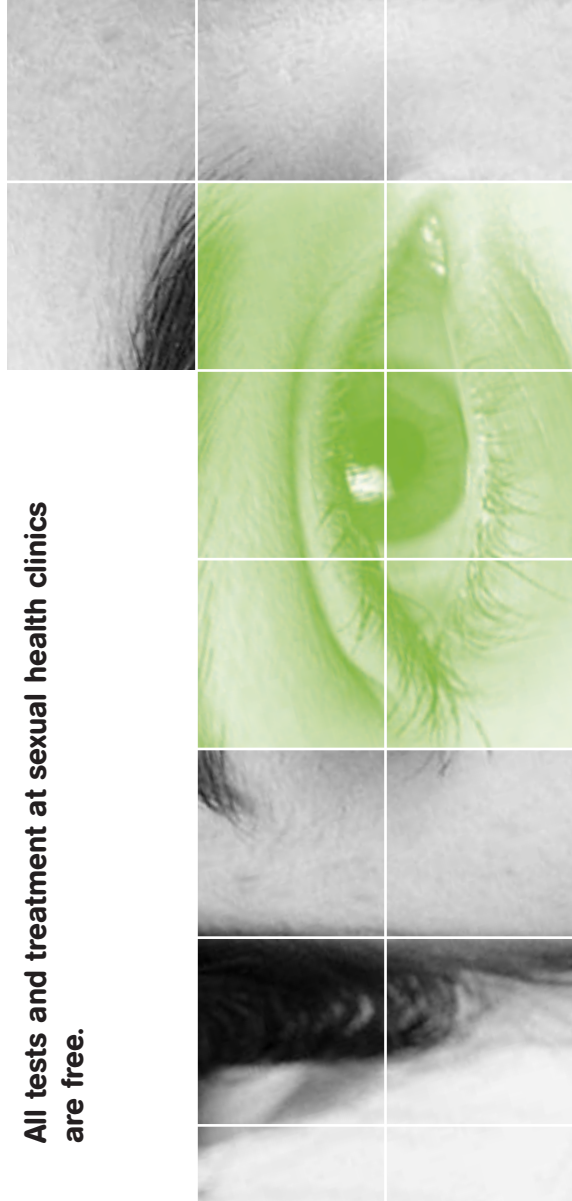
- 1 – **what is wrong with me?**
- 2 – **what do I need to do?**
- 3 – **why is it important for me to do this?**

The doctor or nurse will be happy to answer these questions. The answers will help to explain if any thing is wrong and what you need to do to get better or stay healthy.

If you want to know more about thrush or BV or want any further confidential and free help and advice about sex or sexual health call **Sexwise 0800 28 29 30**.

Produced by Health First with support from Southwark Alliance and Lewisham Teenage Pregnancy Programme.

[www.healthfirst.nhs.uk](http://www.healthfirst.nhs.uk) March 2006



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