



Some Facts About **Vaginitis . . .**

- Vaginitis is one of the most common reasons women see their doctors. Annually, there are more than 10 million patient visits for vaginal complaints in the United States. Of these 10 million office visits, as many as 50% will be due to infectious vaginitis.
- The three most frequent causes of vaginitis are bacterial vaginosis (BV), yeast vaginitis (candidiasis) and *Trichomonas vaginalis* (trichomoniasis). Each of these three conditions requires different courses of therapy for treatment. Therefore, accurate diagnosis is important so that complications from these infection(s) can be minimized.
- In the United States alone, it is estimated that 5 million new cases of trichomoniasis occur each year in women and men. In fact, trichomoniasis is the most common curable Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) in young, sexually active women.
- BV is the most common vaginal infection in women of childbearing age; it is associated with an imbalance in the bacteria that are normally found in a woman's vagina. It can be associated with sexual intercourse but is not sexually transmitted. As many as 16% of pregnant women in the United States have BV.
- Vaginal candidiasis is the second most common form of vaginal infection. Three quarters of all adult women will experience at least one episode of vaginal candidiasis during their lifetime, with 40–50% experiencing a second episode. Approximately 5% of the adult female population suffer from recurrent yeast infections.
- Trichomoniasis and BV can increase a woman's susceptibility to HIV infection if she is exposed to the virus. Both conditions also increase the chance that an HIV-infected woman can pass HIV to her sex partner.
- The complications of BV and trichomoniasis can be especially significant in pregnant women. If either condition is present in a pregnant woman, there is a significantly increased risk of pre-term delivery and/or delivering a low birth weight baby.
- If left untreated, BV and trichomoniasis can sometimes cause significant harm to a woman's reproductive system if Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID) develops. PID is an infection of the uterus and fallopian tubes. PID can lead to infertility or ectopic pregnancy through damage to the fallopian tubes.
- Proper diagnosis of vaginitis can be difficult since up to 50% of women with BV may have no symptoms. In addition, current diagnostic tools have varying degrees of accuracy and time to result. Due to the significant complications which may occur, and the fact that treatment is different for each condition, it remains extremely important that women have access to the best diagnostic tools available.