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RECURRENT VAGINAL YEAST INFECTIONS

Long term maintenance Regimens:

Oral fluconazole (Diflucin) 150-mg weekly for 3-6 months is often the first line of treatment. If this regimen is not feasible, topical clotrimazole 200 mg twice a week, or clotrimazole 500-mg vaginal suppositories once weekly can be used instead.

These therapies are effective in reducing recurrent yeast infections. However, 30%–50% of women will have recurrent disease after therapy is discontinued. Routine treatment of sex partners is controversial and not been definitively proven to be effective.

If recurrence occurs, 600 mg of Boric acid in a gelatin capsule can be used (has to be formulated by the pharmacy), administered vaginally once daily for 2 weeks. This regimen is effective in 70% of cases.

Occasionally a mild vinegar douche (10% vinegar in 90% water) will be recommended.

Nutritional Approaches to Healthy Intestinal Bacteria:

Women with chronic yeast infections, or people at risk for fungal infections, may want to consider supplementing their diets with foods and nutrients that have been shown to discourage fungal infection in the first place. Probably the most effective method is to maintain a healthy population of beneficial bacteria in the gut, which can reduce the risk of vaginal infections.

Yogurt and Probiotics. Studies have shown that daily ingestion of 150 mL of yogurt enriched with live *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, up to 900mg per day, can increase levels of friendly bacteria in the rectum and vagina and can reduce the risk of yeast infection and colonization. This therapy is generally well tolerated, except among people with specific milk protein allergies. Even people who are lactose intolerant oftentimes find that yogurt is tolerable.

Fructooligosaccharides. Fructooligosaccharides are a form of sugar that has been shown to boost beneficial bacteria levels. One teaspoon (4 g) daily of fructooligosaccharide promotes the proliferation of friendly bifido bacteria in the gut.

Other Nutrients that Fight Fungal Infection:

Certain nutrients have been shown to reduce the risk of fungal infection by attacking the organisms directly or enhancing the immune response. These include the following:

Goldenseal. The active ingredient of the herbal root goldenseal is called berberine. At doses of 250-750mg per day, one of its many pharmacologic actions is metabolic inhibition of certain organisms, including fungi. If taken for an extended period of time, goldenseal may cause digestive problems, constipation, nervous excitement, hallucinations, and delirium. Do not take goldenseal for more than 3 weeks in a row. Wait at least 2 weeks before resuming use of goldenseal.

Lactoferrin. Several studies have found that lactoferrin, a subfraction of whey protein, inhibits a wide range of bacteria, yeasts, and even certain intestinal parasites. Lactoferrin 300mg orally has been described as an important part of the primary host immune defense against microbes including Candida. C. albicans, in particular, has been proven to be inhibited by lactoferrin. Studies have also shown that Lactoferrin worked well in combination with fluconazole, a prescription antifungal.

Tea tree oil. Studies have demonstrated the antifungal properties of the oil of the tea tree (Melaleuca alternifolia) against a wide range of fungal isolates, including Candida.

Essential oils. Oils from various herbs, including clove, cayenne, and especially oregano (460mg per day), have been tested against Candida organisms. In a study on animals, oregano and clove oil reduced the number of colony counts. Oregano oil in combination with clove oil has also been shown to reduce the fungal load, which would decrease the risk of candida infection in animals.

Garlic. Garlic, 600mg per day, has a number of antimicrobial properties and has been shown to inhibit the growth of candida in the laboratory. Lab studies have revealed that candida is especially sensitive to a purified extract of garlic known as allyl alcohol. Garlic has blood-thinning, anti clotting properties. Discontinue using garlic before any surgical procedure. Garlic can cause headache, muscle pain, fatigue, vertigo, watery eyes, asthma, and gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea and diarrhea. Ingesting large amounts of garlic can cause bad breath and body odor.

Calcium Oxalate: This chemical is excreted in urine, and is irritating to the tissue. Some patient's have derived some benefit from a low oxalate diet. Foods High In Calcium Oxalate, to be avoided, are: Tea, coffee, cocoa, peanuts, beans, beets, berries, cranberries, eggplant, sweet potatoes, squash, spinach, peppers.

Life style changes:

People who suffer from a yeast infection or are at high risk for a yeast infection may want to make lifestyle changes that have been shown to reduce the risk and severity of yeast infections. The following lifestyle modifications may be effective:

Reducing or avoiding refined sugar

Avoiding foods with a high yeast content

Eating 8 oz yogurt daily to restore normal flora in the digestive tract (especially beneficial with oral or vaginal yeast infections)

Getting ample sleep

Losing weight if necessary

Keeping affected areas dry

Avoiding tight clothing and pantyhose