

## **Whole Woman's Health of Baltimore**

7648 Bel Air Road \* Baltimore MD 21236

(410) 661-2900 \* (800)997-7942

### **Monilia (Yeast or Candida Infections)**

Monilia (also referred to as yeast, fungus, Candida) is an infection caused by spores. These spores may live in the vagina, in the folds of the labia, or in the rectal area without causing irritation. When the spores grow in large numbers, they can cause discomfort.

#### **Causes:**

- When the acid balance of the vagina changes, such as when other types of infection are present.
- When antibiotics are being taken.
- When a woman is pregnant or taking birth control pills.
- When a woman has too much sugar in her system due to diabetes, drinking alcohol, or eating habits.
- Spread through sexual contact (oral, vaginal, penis and/or anal contact)
- A slight possibility of it passing Monilia to a partner's throat by oral-genital contact.

#### **Symptoms:**

- Itching, redness, and swelling at the vaginal opening and labia.
- A white discharge, ranging from light to heavy like "cottage cheese".
- A strong vaginal odor.
- Vulvar burning or stinging with urination.

#### **Diagnosis:**

- The doctor or clinician will examine your vagina and may take a sample of the discharge to look at it under a microscope and check for Monilia spores. Sometimes a Pap smear or Monilia culture will show signs of Monilia.

#### **Treatment:**

- There are many medications used to treat Monilia. These include creams that are inserted into the vagina for 1, 3, or 7 days. These are commonly used to treat yeast infections. Kenalog Cream or other creams may be prescribed, in addition to help with the itching and/or inflammation. Sometimes an oral medication in pill form, Diflucan, is prescribed for yeast infections. Woman who are prescribed vaginal creams may wish to insert the cream at bedtime; this tends to be less messy and more comfortable.
- Good hygiene is especially recommended. Condoms can be used during the treatment period, if appropriate. Infected male partners may get rid of the Monilia without treatment after two weeks of going without genital contact with their infected partner.
- If you get your period while using the medication, be sure to continue to use it. You may want to use sanitary napkins, instead of tampons, with your period. Napkins will absorb less of the medication than tampons and will not cut down on the work the medication is doing to clear up the infection.

#### **Follow-up:**

- If your symptoms have not improved with in one week you need to return to Whole Woman's Health. If the infection clears up, there is no need to return. If you have repeated infections, your partner(s) should be checked. You may be passing it back and forth. If a woman gets frequent yeast infections, she should be evaluated for underlying health problems that make a woman more susceptible to vaginal Monilia.

#### **Prevention:**

- If you or your partner(s) have symptoms of Monilia, the use of condoms by male partners or avoiding sexual contact may help to prevent you from passing the infection back and forth. If condoms are used, they should be put on after the penis is erect but before genital contact is made. (see condom info sheet)
- Wear loose clothing and cotton underpants since Monilia grows in warm, moist places. Avoid tight pants, nylon fabrics, thong underwear and girdles which prevent air circulation and keep the vaginal lips moist.
- Practice good general hygiene. Feminine hygiene sprays often cause irritation and swelling in the vaginal area. Soap and water with thorough rinsing are the best cleaners and deodorizers. Dry the genital area thoroughly after showering, bathing, and swimming.
- If you are overweight, losing weight may prevent repeated Monilia infections.
- For those women with repeated Monilia infections, the use of vinegar or yogurt douches may help, but should first be discussed with your physician.
- Although not medically proven, eating cultured yogurt daily may prevent infection.

### **Information About Monilia (Yeast Infection) Medications**

#### **Gyne-Lotrimin Vaginal Cream, Terazol 7 or 3 Cream, or Gyne-Lotrimin Vaginal Tablets (Clotrimazole)**

These may be prescribed to treat Monilia. You place these medications inside your vagina where they kill the Monilia. You should use these medications for the full number of days prescribed, even if your symptoms go away. If you stop sooner, the infection may flare up again.

Contraindications (when NOT to use Gyne-Lotrimin Cream or Tablets)

Allergic reactions in the past to any contents of this medication.

#### Possible Side Effects

Skin rash, itching, burning, redness and irritation of the labia. Irritation of sexual partner(s) occurs rarely. If any of these symptoms occur, stop using the Gyne-Lotrimin and call us for further instructions.

#### **Kenalog Cream (Triamcinolone Acetonide Cream)**

This may be prescribed to help relieve the itching and inflammation of Monilia. This cream should be put onto the labia and the vaginal opening and rubbed in gently. The cream relieves symptoms and should not be used in place of the medication that kills Monilia.

Contraindications (when NOT to use Kenalog Cream)

Allergic reactions in the past to any contents of this medication.

#### Possible Side Effects

Burning, itching, irritation, dryness, skin infection, hypopigmentation (loss of color of the skin), skin atrophy (wasting away). If any of these side effects occur, stop using Kenalog Cream and call us for further instructions.

#### **Diflucan Tablet, 150 mg**

Diflucan is taken by mouth as a onetime dose. Vaginal symptoms of yeast infection usually improve in 24 to 48 hours after swallowing the pill.

Contraindications (when not to take Diflucan)

Allergies or hyper-sensitivity to Diflucan when taken in the past.

#### Possible Side-Effects

Nausea, abdominal cramping, upset stomach, diarrhea, bad taste in mouth. If any of these side effects occur, call us for further instructions.