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Atrophic Vaginitis

What is atrophic vaginitis?

Also called vulvovaginal atrophy, vaginal atrophy, urogenital atrophy and genitourinary syndrome of menopause, this is a syndrome due to estrogen loss in the perimenopause / menopausal period, or even due to certain cancer treatments, that can result in symptoms of vaginal dryness, irritation and burning, itching, pain with sex, urinary frequency, recurrent urinary tract infections (UTIs), and even sometimes vaginal spotting.

How do we treat atrophic vaginitis?

- Avoid soap, fragrance and other products to the vulva
- **Non-hormonal vaginal moisturizers** can be used routinely 2-3x per week
 - Moisturizers should be used inside the vagina, and if needed around the clitoris and labia
 - They should be applied right before bedtime for better absorption
 - Recommended brands are Replens, Revaree and K-Y liquibeads
 - The most effective moisturizers have *hyaluronic acid* in them
- In addition to regular moisturizer use, a water-based non-fragranced **lubricant** should be used prior to sexual intercourse
 - Recommend brands are K-Y jelly and Slippery Stuff
- Apply cool packs before and after sexual activity as needed to reduce pain and swelling
- If sex is painful, **vaginal dilators** can be very helpful to widen the vaginal opening that gets narrower over time in a low estrogen state
- **Medications** can be also prescribed by your provider to include vaginal estrogen cream, vaginal estrogen rings, vaginal DHEA and vaginal testosterone
 - This is not a "one-size-fits-all" treatment
 - Be patient with your symptoms. You should notice a slow but gradual improvement of symptoms over time
- Your provider may recommend additional treatments, such as vaginal lasers and/or PRP.
 - **Vaginal lasers** are a safe and easy treatment that work by promoting your vaginal tissues to make their own collagen. Collagen production helps improve the elasticity and quality of the vaginal tissue, and also stimulates natural lubricant production.
 - **PRP** (platelet rich plasma) is a therapy where your own blood is drawn and spun down so that all the healthy platelet cells are separated from the rest of the blood. Your own plasma is then injected into the vagina to stimulate stem cell production, which helps to heal the tissues. This also improves elasticity, quality of the the vaginal tissue, lubrication level, and can significantly help with pain from intercourse. This is also a very safe treatment.