NON-HORMONAL TREATMENT OF VULVO-VAGINAL ATROPHY

Dena Harris MD
drharris@sohoobgyn.com

DIAGNOSIS OF ATROPHY
Differentiate atrophy from lichens sclerosis or other vulvar dystrophy or skin conditions
Recognize it can occur throughout a woman’s life -
menopause, breast feeding, ? contraceptive use long term, chemotherapy, breast cancer hormonal treatment

Menopausal atrophy
can occur in perimenopause (years leading up to menopause)

MAINTAIN SEXUAL ACTIVITY
Increases elasticity pliability and lubricative response

LOSE WEIGHT
To prevent diabetes and infection

STOP SMOKING
Decreases blood circulation, early menopause, reduces effects of estrogen

VAGINAL BIRTHS
Decreases sexual pain

EXERCISE
Promotes circulation, flexibility sense of well being, increase sexual response
Yoga, Qigong, walking
TREAT INFECTIONS
Lower pH, lactobacillus probiotics
Rephresh, luvena and vaginal probiotics compounded

AVOID IRRITANTS
Be careful of allergies or sensitivities
Glycerin, benzocaine, chlorhexidine, parabens and propylene glycol latex and condoms with lanolin
(petroleum based products mineral oil and petroleum jelly can interfere with condom efficacy)
Menstrual pads, laundry soaps, bleaches, fabric softeners, fabric dyes, synthetic fibers, bathwater additives, toilet tissue, spermicides, some lubricants or creams, vaginal contraceptives and vaginal rings and diaphragms

MOISTURIZERS AND LUBRICANTS

EXTERNAL
Aloe vera
Wheat germ, coconut oil, olive oil, aquaphor, fenugreek, damiana, kiwi fruit extract externally
O creams –sildenafil
Vagisil feminine moisturizer

INTERNAL
Avoid ginseng, may have estrogenic activity
Vitamin E gel capsules punctured and place in the vagina – stains so needs panty liner - or use vitamin E oil externally
Douching with baking soda
HYALURONIC ACID - hyalo gyn
Replens - a polycarbophil based vaginal moisturizing gel 3 times weekly – acts as a bioadhesive and produces a moist film
that adheres to the vagina surface restoring vaginal ph and improving cytologic morphology
Silicone based lubricants
Astroglide, K-Y intrigue(? Sp) – glycerin free versions to avoid irritation
Silk-E, Me Again, Very Private moisturizers every 2-3 days, YES from Canada

COMPLEMENTARY PRODUCTS AND COMPOUND PRODUCTS
Estriol-metabolic clearance is more rapid
Hyaluronic acid
Oral vitamin D
Testosterone vaginally – under investigation
Isoflavones—
   plant derived phytoestrogens from soy or red clover – have an estrogen like effect but may be associated with elevated estrogen levels
Licorice, alfalfa, fennel, anise, hops and Asian ginseng are also phytoestrogens

DHEA –
   intravaginal capsules that do not increase estrogen levels and some studies show low levels are associated with increased cancer risks where higher levels may show lower cancer risk. – results need to be duplicated
Black cohosh- no studies supporting effectiveness
Oatmeal poultice
Aloe vera juice topically for itching or douche
Douche with calendula Echinacea, garlic, goldenseal, fresh plantain, st johns wort or tea tree oil. (can be a common allergen)
Comfrey externally only
Calendula and Vitamin A vaginal cuppositories
MECHANICAL MEASURES - PHYSICAL THERAPY AND DIALATORS
Recent studies show effectiveness
Sexual activity helps
Dilators help
Lidocaine gel with sexual activity - with or without condoms

SERMS
Tamoxifen-
Premenopausal causes atrophy but postmenopausal can decrease atrophy
Ospemifene (osphena) hot flashes, thromboembolism
Possible decrease in breast cancer and increase in bone density
Thick endometrium in some studies but no atypical endometrial hyperplasia

VAGINAL LASER
Mona Lisa touch, Fotona--
Three short 5-10 minute procedures spaced 6 weeks apart
Replenishment of vaginal tissues - encourages cells to promote collagen
Ablative resurfacing
Promotes blood flow
Question of efficacy - trials only 12 weeks - need further studies
UNDER INVESTIGATION

ESTRIOL
Vagitocin- OXYTOCIN- increase the number of mature cells in the vaginal mucosa and increase the number of layers
Human bovine colostrum ZP-025 VAGINAL GEL
TSEC- tissue selective estrogen complex
STEAR- BZA/CE – combination SERM bazedoxifene and conjugated estrogens
Seala – SERM
Prasterone – androgen derivative dhea suppository
Herbs and supplements –
ZESTRA,- YES from Canada,
ARGINIMAX- l arginine boosts nitric oxide that promotes blood flow

PRP AND STEM CELL INJECTIONS
Under investigation
References

Prasterone Has a Parallel Beneficial Effects on the Main Symptom of Vulvovaginal Atrophy, ONLINE, Maturitas, February 16, 2015

Vulvovaginal Atrophy Symptoms Improve With Prasterone Treatment, Harding, Medscape, 3/5/15

