A Gout is a condition that develops in some people who sustain high blood levels of urate (also called uric acid). Urate forms crystals that can settle in the body’s tissues. When deposited in and around joints, urate crystals cause the sudden attacks of pain, redness, and tenderness in joints that are characteristic of gouty arthritis.

Uric acid forms when the body breaks down purine, a substance that is produced in the body and also found in certain foods. Doctors used to recommend that people with gout avoid dietary purines, but now we have drug treatments that are much more effective at reducing urate in the blood. But some people can’t tolerate gout medications, and for others, avoiding dietary purine may reduce the severity of gout attacks.

Purines are found in all meats, fish, and poultry, so unless you’re a vegetarian, it’s very difficult to avoid them completely. Try limiting your intake of these foods to six ounces per day. And avoid certain high-purine foods altogether: anchovies, herring, mackerel, and organ meats, such as liver, brains, kidneys, and sweetbreads.

People with gout should use alcohol only in moderation, or not at all. It not only increases urate production, it also reduces the body’s ability to remove urate through the kidneys. Be sure to drink plenty of fluids, which help remove uric acid from the body. It’s also important to maintain a healthy weight to help protect your joints from stress during daily activities. But don’t sign up for crash weight-loss programs that involve fasting or low-carbohydrate diets that are high in protein and fat. Such diets can raise blood levels of urate and precipitate an attack of gout.

A About 75% of women will have at least one episode of vaginal yeast infection, or vulvovaginal candidiasis, at some point in their lives. Though yeast infections are not as common after menopause, they still account for some cases of vaginitis (vaginal inflammation) and are more common in women taking hormone therapy. The microorganism Candida albicans is usually responsible. Candida organisms are normally present in the vagina, mouth, and digestive tract. They usually coexist peacefully with bacteria and contribute to a healthy balance of vaginal microorganisms. Infection occurs only when there is an overgrowth of Candida.

One cause of yeast overgrowth is the use of antibiotics, which are helpful in treating urinary tract and other infections but can also kill bacteria that help keep yeast under control. It’s common to develop a yeast infection after completing a round of antibiotics.

Candida overgrowth tends to occur in women who are pregnant, take oral contraceptives containing high levels of estrogen, or have uncontrolled diabetes; and in women whose immune systems are suppressed by corticosteroids, HIV infection, or chemotherapy. Risk may also be increased by certain contraceptive devices such as sponges, diaphragms, or IUDs, perfumed feminine hygiene sprays or douches, and wearing tight, poorly ventilated clothing and underwear.

Vulvovaginal candidiasis is not considered a sexually transmitted disease, since it can occur in celibate women, and Candida is normally present in the vagina. But the risk increases after women begin regular sexual activity, though the reasons aren’t entirely clear.

Symptoms are the same in women of all ages—itching and soreness of the labia and other tissues surrounding the vagina, burning during urination, and pain during sexual intercourse. A white, clumpy vaginal discharge may also be present.

Since Candida is not the only organism that can cause vaginal infection, itching, and discharge, it’s important for a clinician to confirm the diagnosis. Several oral and vaginal treatments are available. The usual first choice is a vaginal cream used daily for three to seven days or a single oral dose of fluconazole (pregnant women should not take oral fluconazole). Yeast infection may take longer to eliminate in women with severe vaginal inflammation, uncontrolled diabetes, or immune suppression.

Celeste Robb-Nicholson, M.D.
Editor in Chief, HWHW
Source: from Harvard Health Publications, Harvard Health Publications, Copyright 2005 by President and Fellows of Harvard College. All rights reserved. Harvard authorizes you to view or download a single copy of the Harvard Content on EBSCOhost solely for your personal, noncommercial use if you include the following copyright notice: "Copyright, President and Fellows of Harvard College. All rights reserved" and other copyright and proprietary rights notices which were contained in the Harvard Content. Reproduction and/or redistribution of the Harvard Content is expressly prohibited. Any special rules for the use of other items provided on EBSCOhost may be included elsewhere within the site and are incorporated into these Terms and Conditions.

The Harvard Content is protected by copyright under both United States and foreign laws. Title to the Harvard Content remains with President and Fellows, Harvard College. Any use of the Harvard Content not expressly permitted by these Terms and Conditions is a breach of these Terms and Conditions and may violate copyright, trademark, and other laws. Harvard Content and features are subject to change or termination without notice in the editorial discretion of Harvard. All rights not expressly granted herein are reserved to President and Fellows, Harvard College.

If you violate any of these Terms and Conditions, your permission to use the Harvard Content automatically terminates and you must immediately destroy any copies you have made of any portion of the Harvard Content.

MEDICAL DISCLAIMER

The information contained in this online site is intended to provide accurate and helpful health information for the general public. It is made available with the understanding that the author and publisher are not engaged in rendering medical, health, psychological, or any other kind of personal professional services on this site. The information should not be considered complete and does not cover all diseases, ailments, physical conditions or their treatment. It should not be used in place of a call or visit to a medical, health or other competent professional, who should be consulted before adopting any of the suggestions in this site or drawing inferences from it.

The information about drugs contained on this site is general in nature. It does not cover all possible uses, actions, precautions, side effects, or interactions of the medicines mentioned, nor is the information intended as medical advice for individual problems or for making an evaluation as to the risks and benefits of taking a particular drug.

The operator(s) of this site and the publisher specifically disclaim all responsibility for any liability, loss or risk, personal or otherwise, which is incurred as a consequence, directly or indirectly, of the use and application of any of the material on this site.