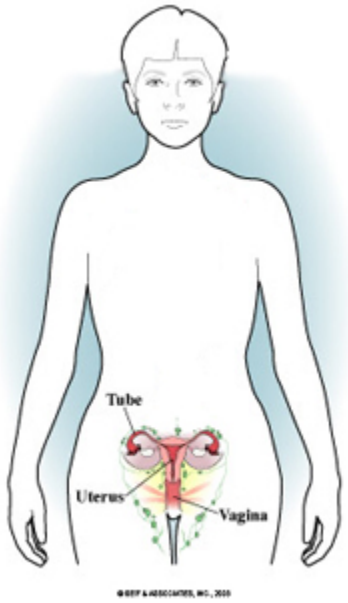
Atrophic Vaginitis

Atrophic vaginitis is a problem of low levels of estrogen in women.



This problem can happen at any age. It is most common in women who have gone through menopause ("the change"). Menopause happens in women who:

- Are ages 45-55.
- Have had surgery to remove their ovaries.

It can also happen in women:

- Who are breast-feeding.
- Using medicines that lowers estrogen levels in the blood.
- Who are having radiation or cancer treatments.

HOW WILL I KNOW IF I HAVE THIS PROBLEM?

You may have:

- Trouble with peeing, such as:
  - Going to the bathroom often.
  - A hard time holding the pee till you reach a bathroom.
  - Leaking pee.
  - Having pain when you pee.
- Itching and/or a burning feeling.
- Vaginal bleeding and spotting.
- Pain during sex.
- Dryness of the vagina.
- A yellow, bad smelling discharge coming from the vagina.

HOW WILL MY DOCTOR CHECK FOR THIS PROBLEM?

- During your exam, your doctor will likely find the problem.
- If there is a vaginal discharge, it may be checked for infection.

HOW WILL THIS PROBLEM BE TREATED?

- Keep the vulvar skin as clean as possible. Moisturizers and lubricants can help with some of the symptoms.
- Estrogen replacement can help. There are 2 ways to take estrogen:
  - **Systemic Estrogen** gets estrogen to your whole body. It takes many weeks or months before the symptoms get better.
    - You take an estrogen pill.
    - You use a skin Patch. This is a patch that you put on your skin.
    - If you still have your uterus, your doctor may ask you to take a hormone. Talk to your doctor about the right medicine for you.
  - **Estrogen Cream.** This puts estrogen only at the part of your body where you apply it. The cream is put into the vagina or put on the vulvar skin. For some women, estrogen cream works faster than pills or the patch.

CAN ALL WOMEN WITH THIS PROBLEM USE ESTROGEN?

No. Women with certain types of cancer, liver problems, or problems with blood clots should not take estrogen. Your doctor can help you decide the best treatment for your symptoms.

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