Lichen Planus

Lichen planus is a skin problem that causes redness, itching, swelling and sores. Some common areas affected are:

- The vulva and vagina.
- The gums and inside of the mouth.
- The skin of the arms, legs, chest, back and belly.
- The fingernails or toenails.

The cause is not known. It could be an autoimmune illness or an allergy. An autoimmune illness is one where your body attacks itself. Lichen planus is **not** passed from one person to another. It can last for a long time.

SIGNS OF LICHEN PLANUS:

- You may have more vaginal discharge than usual. The discharge may be sticky, heavy and yellow.
- The vaginal area may be red, sore, raw and have a burning feeling.
- There may be pain or bleeding during sex.
- Scarring may cause the vagina to become too short, narrow or even closed up.
- There may be a reddish or purplish rash on the skin.
- There may be redness or white patches on the gums or tongue.
- The nails may become thin or rough or have ridges in them.

HOW WILL MY DOCTOR CHECK FOR LICHEN PLANUS?

Your doctor will look for skin changes, changes inside your mouth, or vaginal discharge. Sometimes, a biopsy or small sample of skin may be sent for testing.

TREATMENT

- Keep the vaginal area as clean and dry as possible.
- Your doctor may order a special cream to be put on the sores.
- You may be given medicine to take by mouth.
- You may be treated by exposure to ultraviolet light.
- Sores in the mouth may be treated with special lozenges that are sucked on like a cough drop.
- If the vagina becomes too tight, you may be taught how to use a dilator to keep it open.

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