

Your guide to OTC feminine health

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Vagisil

Make sure your customers get the right advice in four key areas with our pull-out and keep guide

Four facts about... non-infectious itching

- 1** Some women get feminine itch just before their periods because of the increased blood flow to the area; this is completely normal and not cause for concern.
- 2** There are several possible causes of non-infectious feminine itch. If the patient is not showing any other symptoms, consider if any of the following may be causing it:
 - Tight clothing
 - A recent course of antibiotics
 - Monthly hormonal changes
 - An allergic reaction or a skin complaint, for example to a scented soap or a tampon
 - Vaginal dryness.
- 3** Tight clothing and items that don't 'breathe' well, such as tights, can cause poor feminine hygiene. Recommend the patient wears cotton underwear, or uses powder to prevent dampness.
- 4** Remember to ask a patient if an itch is normal for them; all women will experience symptoms differently, and will know what's right for their body.

Four facts about... infectious itching

- 1** Infectious itching is often accompanied by other symptoms, including:
 - a burning itch
 - vaginal discharge - this could be clear, white, green or yellow and range from watery to a cottage cheese-like consistency
 - a strong, unpleasant, fishy smell
 - pain (including during intercourse)
 - light vaginal bleeding.
- 2** The most common cause of infectious itching is bacterial vaginosis, which requires treatment with antibiotics.
- 3** Patients can take products to relieve symptoms such as itching while taking medication to treat the infection.
- 4** Women who suspect they have thrush should be referred to the pharmacist if they have never had it before, are under 16 years, over 60 years, or have had:
 - two bouts of symptoms in six months
 - vaginal bleeding or lower abdominal pain
 - foul-smelling discharge
 - a treatment that didn't work.

Four facts about... wetness and odour

- 1** Wetness and odour are relatively common problems and don't automatically mean there is an infection. They could be due to sweating, urine leakage, the menstrual cycle or sexual activity.
- 2** If discharge is thicker than normal, or a different colour, it's important patients talk to the pharmacist.
- 3** Normal discharge can have an odour, but if it is particularly bad, with a foul, fishy or yeasty smell, it could indicate an infection and the patient should talk to the pharmacist.
- 4** Urinary incontinence is a surprisingly common condition; it's estimated up to 13 per cent of women are affected. Patients should be advised to talk to the pharmacist as there are treatments that can help.

Vagisil delivers expert feminine care

The Vagisil range offers a complete selection of products for women to cleanse, soothe and protect the vaginal area. Vagisil Feminine Wash uses a pH-balanced, soap-free formula to allow cleaning without irritation, while Vagisil Feminine Powder helps tackle odour and moisture. And, should an itch develop, Vagisil Medicated Creme works instantly to relieve external itching, burning and irritation caused by thrush, perspiration, deodorants and detergents. The range also includes feminine wipes and a deodorising mist.

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Four facts about... sexual health

- 1** Last year, sexually transmitted infection (STI) rates increased to nearly 427,000 new cases - with people aged under 25 years particularly at risk.
- 2** Worryingly, screening rates for the UK's most common STI, chlamydia, have dropped. It's particularly important to urge young women to get tested.
- 3** Many sexual infections - including chlamydia - have no obvious symptoms, but signs can include pain, unusual periods or unusual discharge. Refer any patients you suspect may have an STI to the pharmacist.
- 4** Safe sex advice is simple: always use a condom when having sex with new or casual partners. Customers under 25 years should be screened for chlamydia every year, and on change of sexual partner.

REMEMBER

SCRATCHING AN ITCH CAN MAKE IT WORSE - GET IT CHECKED OUT!