

## **Heathgate Medical Practice Self-care leaflet – Vaginal thrush**

This range of leaflets created by our clinical team provide useful information on a range of conditions that can in most cases be managed by patients at home. Where symptoms persist after a period of self-care or after advice from the local pharmacist, you should consider calling the surgery.

### **What is vaginal thrush?**

Thrush is a common yeast or fungal infection caused by candida. It is a normal inhabitant of the vagina and can cause a problem when the balance of the vaginal environment changes. This causes the candida to overgrow and cause thrush or candidiasis.

### **What are the common triggers?**

- Taking antibiotics
- Overheating due to wearing tights or leggings
- Perfumed soaps or washes
- Hormonal changes (before a period or during pregnancy)

### **What are the symptoms of thrush?**

- Itching
- Vaginal soreness
- Pain on intercourse
- Burning sensation on passing urine
- Thick white discharge similar in consistency to cottage cheese

### **Over the counter treatments**

There are different types of treatments that can be purchased over the counter at a local pharmacy. These include:

- Fluconazole (Diflucan) tablets – 150mg single dose
- Clortimazole (Canesten) pessary – 500mg as a one off dose. The pessary must be inserted slowly into the vagina with the applicator provided so that it can dissolve overnight

### **When should you see a doctor or a nurse?**

- If you are under 16 or over 60 and have symptoms
- If your symptoms do not settle within 7 – 10 days after using an over the counter treatment from the pharmacy
- If you are pregnant
- If you have more than four episodes of thrush in a year

### **How to avoid recurrent thrush**

- Avoid using scented bath additives or soap
- Wear cotton underwear and loose fitting trousers and skirts
- Avoid latex condoms, spermicidal creams or lubricants if they cause vaginal irritation

**Further advice on managing vaginal thrush is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)**