**Genitourinary Syndrome of Menopause**

**Summarized by Maria C. Asis, MD**

A term defining genital/sexual and urinary changes that occur with menopause

Pathophysiology - with the loss of estrogen, and interaction with its receptors in the vagina and the base of the bladder, a decrease in collagen and elastin along with regression of vascular supply occurs making the tissue less pliable. Additionally, with the loss of estrogen, there is loss of lactobacillus which keeps vaginal PH down naturally. As lactobacilli go down, vaginal pH rises and so do the number of enterobacter, leading to symptoms of bacterial vaginosis.

Clinically, these changes demonstrate as dryness, vulvovaginal irritation/pruritus, dysuria, frequency, urgency and recurrent urinary tract infections, as well as, painful intercourse leading to decreased drive.

**Solutions:**

Lifestyle: quit smoking, avoid fragrances, cotton underwear, regular intercourse (with or without partner) and

Pelvic floor exercises

**Vaginal moisturizers and lubricants**:

Choose a product with:

 PH between 3-7 and osmolality between 200-1200

Avoid parabens - if avoiding estrogen, parabens theoretically have a weak estrogenic effect

Avoid chlorhexidine – may cause tissue irritation and increase risk of sexually transmitted diseases

Avoid glycol content above 9% - may be food source for yeast.

Avoid petroleum based products - Vaseline, mineral oil, baby oil – may be irritating and not latex safe

**Differences between moisturizers and lubricants**:

Moisturizers attempt to rehydrate and also provide a biofilm so effect lasts a few days; Lubricants decrease friction

Moisturizer: Replens - pH2.9 and osmolality2011, contains glycerin,

Lubricant: Astroglide pH 4, and osmolality of 6100, contains glycerin and chlorhexidine

Most patients tolerate these products, they are easily available and relatively inexpensive

**For patients with sensitivities:**

Moisturizers: Yes, Canesintima, Sylk

Lubricants: Good Clean Love, Uberlube (silicone) Wet Platinum

**Combination products of moisturizers and lubricants:**

Lubrigyn: hyaluronic acid, Elastin, Almond oil , Luvena

**\*With all products, review package insert for compatibility with condoms**

**WEBSITE FOR PRODUCTS:** [**www.middlesexmd.com**](http://www.middlesexmd.com)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** [**www.acog.org**](http://www.acog.org)[**www.menopause.org**](http://www.menopause.org)