

facts about thrush

- Three out of four women will suffer from thrush at some point, and up to half of those will experience it on more than one occasion
- Thrush is most common in women in their 20s or 30s
- Women will commonly suffer from thrush around the times of hormonal changes, such as during periods, when pregnant or after the menopause
- It may cause uncomfortable internal symptoms (e.g. discharge) and external symptoms (e.g. itchiness).

key treatment options

There are a number of treatment options for customers suffering from thrush, but it is important that sufferers treat internally and externally to cool and clear the infection. This Guide will introduce you to the key combination treatments for thrush.



self-test questions

To check your understanding of this condition and its treatment, answer these self-test questions.

1. Canesten Combi:

- a. Relieves external symptoms
- b. Treats the internal infection
- c. Cools and clears thrush
- d. All of the above

2. A customer asks for a thrush treatment. She has used Canesten External 2% Thrush Cream before but feels she may need something else. She has a hectic lifestyle and needs a hassle-free option.

What would you recommend?

- a. Canesten Duo
- b. Canesten Internal Cream only
- c. Canesten Combi
- d. Canesten Cream Combi

3. A middle-aged customer has tried using a pessary before but found it uncomfortable to insert. She wants something to quickly stop the irritation, soreness and treat the infection.

What would you recommend for this customer?

- a. Canesten 1% Cream
- b. Canesten Cream Combi
- c. Canesten Oral Capsule
- d. Refer her to the doctor

4. Which of the following are symptoms of thrush?

- a. Vaginal dryness
- b. Passing urine frequently
- c. Itchiness and irritation of the vulval and vaginal area
- d. Stomach cramps

Visit the Canesten website (www.canesten.co.uk/competition) where you and your colleagues can enter a competition for the chance to win 1 of 10 food hampers for your pharmacy. *

Self-test answers: 1d, 2a, 3b, 4c

Product Information for Canesten® Cream Combi Internal & External Creams. Presentation: Canesten® Cream Combi Internal & External Creams A 5g pre-filled applicator of internal cream containing clotrimazole 10% w/w, plus a 10g tube of external cream containing clotrimazole 2% w/w. **Indications:** The internal cream is recommended for the treatment of candidal vaginitis. The external cream is recommended for the treatment of candidal vulvitis. It should be used as an adjunct to treatment of candidal vaginitis. **Dosage and Administration: Adults (16 – 60 years):** The internal cream should be administered intravaginally using the applicator. Apply the external cream to the vulva and surrounding area two or three times daily and rub in gently. The treatment should be finished before the onset of menstruation. **Children:** Paediatric usage is not recommended (in under 16). **Contra-indications:** Hypersensitivity to clotrimazole or any other ingredients e.g. cetostearyl alcohol. Not for treatment of nail or scalp infections. **Warnings and Precautions:** Medical advice must be sought if this is the first time the patient has experienced symptoms of candidal vaginitis or if any of the following are applicable: more than two infections of candidal vaginitis in the last six months; previous history of or exposure to partner with a sexually transmitted disease; pregnancy or suspected pregnancy; aged under 16 or over 60 years; known hypersensitivity to imidazoles or other vaginal antifungal products. Medical advice should be sought if the patient has any of the following symptoms: irregular vaginal bleeding; abnormal vaginal bleeding or a blood-stained discharge; vulval or vaginal ulcers, blisters or sores; lower abdominal pain or dysuria; any adverse events such as redness, irritation or swelling associated with the treatment; fever or chills; nausea or vomiting; diarrhoea; foul smelling vaginal discharge. If no improvement in symptoms is seen after seven days, the patient should consult their doctor. This product may damage latex contraceptives therefore patients should use alternative precautions for at least five days after using the product. The creams contain cetostearyl alcohol, which may cause local skin reactions (e.g. contact dermatitis). **Side-effects:** Allergic reaction, genital peeling/exfoliation, blisters, pruritis, rash, oedema, discomfort/pain, stinging/burning, irritation, pelvic pain, abdominal pain. **Use in pregnancy:** Only when considered necessary by a physician. During pregnancy the treatment should be carried out with clotrimazole pessary, since these can be inserted without using an applicator. **RRP:** £11.93. **MA Number:** PL 00010/0301. **MA Holder:** Bayer plc, Consumer Care Division, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 1JA, UK. **Legal Category:** GSL. **Date of Preparation:** August 2010.

Product Information for Canesten® Oral & Cream Duo. Presentation: Canesten® Oral & Cream Duo contains a capsule containing 150mg fluconazole, plus a 10g tube of cream containing clotrimazole 2% w/w. **Indications:** The capsule is for treatment of candidal vaginitis, acute or recurrent. Also for treatment of partners with associated candidal balanitis. The cream is for the treatment of candidal vulvitis. **Dosage and Administration: Adults (16 – 60 years):** Swallow one capsule whole. Apply cream to vulva and surrounding area two or three times daily and rub in gently. Treatment with the cream should be continued until symptoms of the infection disappear. If after concomitant treatment of vaginitis, symptoms do not improve within seven days, the patient should consult a physician. For treatment of sexual partner's penis, cream should be applied two or three times daily for two weeks. **Children:** Paediatric usage is not recommended (in under 16). **Contra-indications:** Hypersensitivity to fluconazole, clotrimazole, related azole compounds or any of the excipients e.g. cetostearyl alcohol; co-administration with terfenadine or cisapride. **Warnings and Precautions:** Adequate contraception necessary. A physician should be consulted if the patient or partner have had exposure to sexually transmitted disease, or if the patient: has had more than two infections of thrush in the last six months; is experiencing thrush for the first time; has known hypersensitivity to other vaginal antifungal products; is taking any medicine other than the Pill; has any disease or illness affecting the liver or kidneys or has had unexplained jaundice; suffers from any other chronic disease or illness; is uncertain of the cause of symptoms. Or if the patient has any of the following symptoms: abnormal or irregular vaginal bleeding or a blood-stained discharge; vulval or vaginal sores, ulcers or blisters; lower abdominal pain or dysuria; any adverse events such as redness, irritation or swelling associated with the treatment; fever or chills; nausea or vomiting; diarrhoea; foul smelling vaginal discharge. In men, medical advice should be sought if they have penile sores, ulcers or blisters, there is abnormal penile discharge, the penis has started to smell, they have dysuria, or their sexual partner does not have thrush. Patients should consult their doctor if symptoms have not been relieved within one week. For Canesten® Oral & Cream Duo, the cream contains cetostearyl alcohol, which may cause local skin reactions (e.g. contact dermatitis). The cream may damage latex contraceptives so patients should be advised to use alternative precautions for at least five days after using the product. **Side-effects:** Oral capsule may cause nausea, abdominal pain, diarrhoea and headache. Rarely, rash, hepatotoxicity and anaphylaxis. Exfoliative skin disorders, seizures, leukopenia including neutropenia and agranulocytosis, thrombocytopenia and alopecia have occurred although a causal association is uncertain. Cream may cause allergic reactions, blisters, discomfort/pain, oedema, irritation, peeling/exfoliation, pruritis, rash, stinging/burning. **Use in pregnancy:** Do not use during pregnancy, suspected pregnancy and breast-feeding. **RRP:** £12.99 **MA Number:** PL 00010/0282 & PL 00010/0077. **MA Holder:** Bayer plc, Consumer Care Division, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 1JA, UK. **Legal Category:** P. **Date of Preparation:** July 2010.

Product Information for Canesten® Combi Pessary & Cream. Presentation: Canesten® Combi Pessary & Cream A pessary containing clotrimazole 500mg, plus a 10g tube of cream containing clotrimazole 2% w/w. **Indications:** The pessary is recommended for the treatment of candidal vaginitis. The cream is recommended for the treatment of candidal vulvitis. It should be used as an adjunct to treatment of candidal vaginitis. **Dosage and Administration: Adults (16 – 60 years):** The pessary should be inserted into the vagina using the applicator. Apply the cream to the vulva and surrounding area two or three times daily and rub in gently. The treatment should be finished before the onset of menstruation. **Children:** Paediatric usage is not recommended (in under 16). **Contra-indications:** Hypersensitivity to clotrimazole or any other ingredients e.g. cetostearyl alcohol. Nail or scalp infections. **Warnings and Precautions:** Medical advice must be sought if this is the first time the patient has experienced symptoms of candidal vaginitis or if any of the following are applicable: more than two infections of candidal vaginitis in the last six months; previous history of or exposure to partner with a sexually transmitted disease; pregnancy or suspected pregnancy; aged under 16 or over 60 years; known hypersensitivity to imidazoles or other vaginal antifungal products. Medical advice should be sought if the patient has any of the following symptoms: irregular vaginal bleeding or a blood-stained discharge; vulval or vaginal ulcers, blisters or sores; lower abdominal pain or dysuria; any adverse events such as redness, irritation or swelling associated with the treatment; fever or chills; nausea or vomiting; diarrhoea; foul smelling vaginal discharge. If no improvement in symptoms is seen after seven days, the patient should consult their doctor. This product may damage latex contraceptives therefore patients should use alternative precautions for at least five days after using the product. The cream contains cetostearyl alcohol, which may cause local skin reactions (e.g. contact dermatitis). **Side-effects:** Allergic reaction, genital peeling/exfoliation, blisters, pruritis, rash, oedema, discomfort/pain, stinging/burning, irritation, pelvic pain, abdominal pain. **Use in pregnancy:** Only when considered necessary by a physician. During pregnancy the pessary should be inserted without using an applicator. **RRP:** £11.93. **MA Number:** PL 00010/0300. **MA Holder:** Bayer plc, Consumer Care Division, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 1JA, UK. **Legal Category:** GSL. **Date of Preparation:** August 2010. * = Registered trademark of Bayer AG.

For further information, visit the healthcare professional section of the Canesten website: www.canesten.co.uk/hcp

* This competition is only open to pharmacy assistants currently employed at registered UK pharmacy premises and who are over the age of 18. Only one entry per person. Please see website for full terms and conditions at: www.canesten.co.uk/competition

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Canesten®



Welcome to the first Canesten Customer Care Guide. Throughout this series of Training Guides, you will learn some of the facts about thrush, athlete's foot, cystitis and sweat rash. These Guides will also take you through typical customer journeys so you can see how these conditions can affect people and how your advice can help.

After studying this Customer Care Guide, you will:

- Be confident in advising customers on thrush
- Be able to recommend appropriate thrush treatments and offer self-help tips to customers
- Know when to refer to your pharmacist for further advice.

Within this Guide you will also find a Thrush Treatment Card which gives you an overview of the whole Canesten thrush product range. It also provides you with some key facts about thrush and how to treat it. It is intended for you to use as a reference guide to help you when advising customers.

To help you provide customers with more information, there is also a pad of Customer Leaflets. Each leaflet contains self help tips and treatment options to help your customer effectively manage their condition. If you sense that a customer is particularly embarrassed, needs more information or needs a reminder of the information you have provided, you can give them one of these leaflets. You can either pass it on to the customer or simply put it in their bag with their treatment for them to read afterwards.



A busy woman in her mid-20s approaches the pharmacy counter. Speaking very quietly, she tells you she has had thrush before, and is experiencing the same symptoms again.



helping this customer

Thrush can be an embarrassing condition for many women to discuss with anyone – whether it be with their best friend or a stranger in a pharmacy. Although you may be comfortable discussing the condition, your customer may feel awkward. The way that you talk to this customer can make a big difference to how effectively her condition is treated. You could start by suggesting to her that you continue the conversation away from the pharmacy counter or you could talk quietly so that other customers are less likely to overhear. This can help to put the customer at ease so you are able to gain the correct information and recommend an appropriate treatment plan.

Don't forget WWHAM!

- **Who is the medicine for?**
- **What are the symptoms?**
- **How long has the customer had the symptoms?**
- **Action – has the customer already tried a treatment?**
- **Medication – is the customer taking any other medicine?**

From the conversation so far, you already know that the treatment will be for this woman and that she has had thrush before. However, you still need to ask her the remaining WWHAM questions. She tells you that for the past day she has had thick white discharge and the area is itchy and sore – these are the symptoms that she had last time too.

These are common symptoms of thrush. Other symptoms could include:

- Vulval and vaginal itching and irritation
- Swelling of the vagina walls
- Pain during sexual intercourse.

The customer tells you that she hasn't tried any treatment this time, but last time she had thrush (a year ago) it was diagnosed by a doctor, who also suggested her partner was treated. She isn't taking any other medicine at the moment and confirms that she isn't pregnant or breast feeding.

You would need to refer to the pharmacist if the customer:

- Has experienced more than two episodes of thrush in the last six months
- Was under the age of 16 or over 60
- Was taking other medicine
- Was allergic to antifungal treatments
- Was pregnant
- Has tried a treatment but the symptoms were still present a week later
- Has pain or bleeding or has an offensive-smelling or blood-stained discharge.

understanding thrush

Vaginal thrush is caused by the yeast-like fungus *Candida albicans*. While we all have this fungus living in our bodies naturally, normally it does not cause any problems. 'Friendly' bacteria prevent the fungus from growing too much and help to keep the internal environment of the vagina acidic. However, when a trigger disrupts the pH level and the vagina becomes less acidic, there is a change in the balance of friendly bacteria and the growth of *Candida albicans* is stimulated. This overgrowth of *Candida* causes thrush.

You can explain to your customer that certain lifestyle factors can act as triggers for thrush.

Triggers include:

- Wearing tight or synthetic clothing and underwear
- Taking certain medicines, such as antibiotics
- Stress
- Trauma of sexual activity or tampons
- Hormonal changes such as menstruation, pregnancy and menopause
- Using perfumed toiletries.

As your customer has suffered from thrush before, it would be useful for her to identify possible triggers that she needs to avoid so that she can prevent the condition recurring.

Remember

You can give this customer one of the Canesten Customer Care Leaflets to provide her with self-help tips. You could either talk her through this leaflet or simply put it in her bag with her treatment if she is too busy.

recommending the right treatment

Although it is an uncomfortable condition, thrush can be easily treated using an antifungal agent. Imidazoles are a group of drugs which include the antifungal agents clotrimazole and fluconazole. Often referred to as fungistatics, these drugs work by inhibiting (slowing down and controlling) the growth of the fungal infection.

Don't forget!

It is essential to advise your customer to cool and clear the infection. This means she needs an external cream (e.g. Canesten 2% Thrush Cream) to relieve the symptoms and an internal treatment (e.g. an internal cream, pessary or oral capsule) to clear the underlying infection.

Canesten has a range of combination products to cool and clear the infection: Canesten Combi, Canesten Duo and Canesten Cream Combi. It is essential that this customer uses the treatments as indicated to ensure the infection is cleared effectively.

activity

Look at the Canesten products in your store and read the instructions so that you are clear about how they should be used. Think about how you would relay this information to this customer in a clear and concise way.

There are three different treatment formats available for your customers and the one that you recommend will often be down to the information the customer has given you and their lifestyle needs. From the start of this conversation, we learnt that this customer is busy. For this reason, you could recommend Canesten Duo – a product that contains an oral capsule and an external cream. The capsule is a discreet, hassle-free and easy to take treatment for the internal infection, while the 2% double strength* external cream will help to provide fast relief from the uncomfortable symptoms she is experiencing.

Other customers may prefer a different combination treatment. For example, a woman who wants a traditional preparation that goes directly to the source of the infection may prefer a pessary and 2% double strength* external cream (Canesten Combi) while a young, inexperienced user or a menopausal woman also experiencing vaginal dryness may prefer a combination of a soothing internal cream and 2% double strength* external cream (Canesten Cream Combi) for ease of use.

Men can also suffer from thrush. Very few will develop symptoms, but men do act as 'carriers' of the infection. Advise this customer that her partner should also be treated with 2% double strength* cream to prevent re-infection.

* Compared to Canesten 1% Cream.

cool and clear with Canesten

Familiarise yourself with the three Canesten combination products to help women find the most suitable thrush treatment.

► Canesten Duo

- Oral capsule containing fluconazole 150mg gets to the cause of the infection, and stops the growth of the fungus
- Double strength* cream containing clotrimazole 2% w/w soothes the external symptoms to provide fast relief
- Hassle-free, discreet treatment that can be taken anywhere
- Most suitable for busy women who are on the go or travelling.



► Canesten Combi

- Pessary containing clotrimazole 500mg. This vaginal tablet with applicator treats the underlying infection directly at its source
- Double strength* cream containing clotrimazole 2% w/w soothes external symptoms to provide fast relief
- A traditional preparation most suitable for women who have always used a pessary.



► Canesten Cream Combi

- A pre-filled applicator of internal cream containing clotrimazole 10% w/w to treat the underlying infection directly at its source
- Double strength* cream containing clotrimazole 2% w/w soothes external symptoms to provide fast relief
- Most suitable for women who prefer a soothing cream preparation, particularly inexperienced users and menopausal women who may be experiencing vaginal dryness.

