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Fungal Infections

By - Dr. Ashutosh Pradhan

After Holi in India specifically in Mumbai the heat is at the peak. Along with heat the humidity too is high. Humid and hot weather leads to profuse sweating. We try to keep fans on full mode, sleep-in air-conditioned rooms, yet the skin folds experience too much of sweating. Such prolong exposure to sweat leads to redness of the area further leading to itching. In addition to these conditions if the area is covered with body hair, then it further adds up to the problem. Itching in the folds of skin with or without redness is often due to a medical condition labelled as Fungal Infection.

Common areas of fungal infection include folds of skin where the sweating is excessive. Such as groins, waist in obese people, area below breasts in females, axilla. If the immunity is low, then such an external skin infection spreads to an internal system. In some cases, it may spread to mouth, to ears, to vagina (in women).

In Mumbai as soon as the holi / dhoolwad / ranga-panchami is over the incidence and prevalence of skin fungal infection is on the rise and it continues till the rain sets in. However, in few patients who do not take thorough precautions it may remain for a longer period and become a chronic infection.

Apart from Homoeopathic Treatment which is divided into oral pills and local application in cases where the infection is not getting controlled by oral pills only, we recommend following treatment strategy to make changes in the lifestyle:

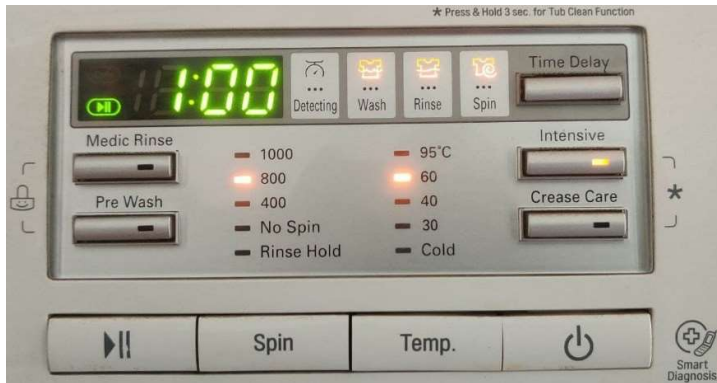
1. Systemic Diseases as a Cause:

- a. **Diabetes:** If the fungal infection around private parts is recurrent it could be because of un-diagnosed, un-controlled Diabetes Mellitus. Get your fasting as well as post-prandial blood sugar and HbA1c checked. We have diagnosed many diabetics based on recurrence of fungal infections.
- b. **CoVid-19:** It has been observed that many patients who are resorted only to modern medicine / allopathic treatment in a CoVid hospital are given steroids. Heavy doses of steroids lead to steroid-induced diabetes. Additionally, the viral disease debilitates the patient and makes the patient prone to fungal infections. Which if not treated on time are becoming life threatening. Post-CoVid fungal infections are also labelled as mucormycosis. In many cases developing severe CoVid-19 is secondary to un-diagnosed Diabetes Mellitus.

2. **Bathing:** In order to avoid perspiration / sweating take bath twice a day. Use ample of soap at the area during bathing but ensure the soap has been washed away completely and no soap trace is left over. If the soap is left over and if you wipe rest of the body the left-over soap in folds will invite fungus.

3. **Soak Clothes in Hot Water:** Often, the fungal infection keeps on recurring. The reason behind that is cross re-infection from clothes. Even if the clothes are washed every day the fungal filaments do not get killed with

regular washing with detergents. However, hot water is proven to kill the fungal filaments from the clothes. In



order to stop cross re-infection, it is advisable to either soak clothes for 1 hour in extreme hot water before loading them in washing machine or hand washing them. It's also recommended to set the washing machine to minimum 60° C temperature. Usually, front loading washing machines comes with temperature settings.

4. **Complete Dryness:** After bath ensure the area is completely dry. Use one additional cotton towel to mop the skin fold areas. We are habituated to use only one towel to wipe off water after the bath. When we wipe off the face and hair, the towel becomes wet and while the same towel is used in the areas of skin folds it fails to mop the water in those areas. If possible after bath sit under full fan without wearing clothes with the skin folds separated wide to expose the area to fan air, so that the area is completely dry.
5. **Inner Wears & Clothes:**
 - a. Inner wear and clothe material and time to wear them contributes a lot to prognosis of fungal infections. Wear 100% cotton inner wears. The inner wears should not be too tight. Do not wear undergarments at night-time while going to bed. Do not wear underwear, nicker, brassier while sleeping at night-time. Continuous wearing of inner wears will lead to sweating and fungal infection. Wear loose cotton clothes without inner wears so that air can pass through easily.
 - b. **Role of Ironing:** Ironing the undergarment as well as clothes kills the fungal filaments thus helping to establish quick control. It sounds funny when we tell patients to iron their undergarments yet clinically it's an effective trick. However, such an ironing should be implemented at home and not outside.
6. **Remove body hair:** In fungal infection in groins around private parts, it is recommended that the pubic hair be removed completely. In case of axillary fungal infections too it is advisable to remove axillary hair. Removing hair in area of skin folds is tricky. It is recommended to use beard trimmers to remove hair. Such used beard trimmers be kept separately only for removing body hair.
7. **Nail Hygiene:** Nail bed is rich source of fungus. Cut nails and whenever you intend to touch the fungus-sensitive area see to it you had hand wash with soap prior touching such an area. Long nails and scratching the area with bare nails often lead to fungal infections as the nail bed is rich in fungus.
8. **Use of Tissue Papers:** It has been observed that many working women use tissue paper wipes in their office toilets. We recommend, do not use tissue paper from public toilets. Often such paper rolls are exposed to dust or fungus and using such a paper leads to fungal infection.
9. **Stocking:** Do not stock used clothes in the ward robe during rains. Often stocked clothes, having dried sweat, attract fungus. Similarly, women should not stock sanitary napkins for long time. Long term stocking of sanitary napkins and use of such stocked napkins often lead to fungal infection of vagina. Further leading to internalization of the infection leading to white discharge.
10. **Sanitary Napkins:** Please see to it that you use 100% cotton sanitary napkins and avoid nylon-based napkins. Typically, heavy flow compatible sanitary napkins such as "...sper Overnight", which are meant to soak profuse period flow are prepared from nylon or synthetic material. If at all it's not possible to use cotton pads, use such sanitary napkins only on days when the menses are heavy. Once the flow reduces, switch over to cotton sanitary napkins. At the end of periods avoid use of sanitary napkins for longer period.

11. **Anxiety:** While performing stressful tasks excessive sweating takes place. Stress induces vaso-vagal stimulation leading to excessive sweating further precipitating fungal infections.

12. **Usual / Unusual Activities:**

- a. Women while cooking are exposed to heat of the stove. Long standing cooking leads to excessive sweating.
- b. On the other hand, washing vessels lead to partially getting wet. Keeping the partially wet clothes on further precipitates fungal infection.
- c. Standing for odd hours for lecturing, waiting at the waiting bay while your kids participate in sports or an examination leads to excessive sweating and fungal infections.
- d. Long sitting hours lead to excessive sweating at and around seat.
- e. **Air conditioner's switch off cycle:** While many of us sleep in air-conditioned room, you may take thick covering in order to protect from too much of cold. The time when the air conditioner is auto switched off or manually switched off, the room temperature increases. Yet the body continues to be covered. During sleep, being unaware of the changed temperature, covered areas sweat a lot. The skin folds get drenched with sweat and further make the person prone to fungal infections.

Take care to avoid excessive sweating. However, if at all you could not avoid it, wash the sweat covered area with tap cold water and further dry it completely.

13. **Do not Ignore Discharges:**

- a. In case of individuals who suffer from chronic piles leading to fissures, fistulas, there may be discharge of pus through the anus / fistula. The under garments may get wet most of the time due to such a leaking discharge. Homoeopathy can cure piles, fissures, fistulas completely. Please bring it to our notice and we will make changes in the medicines.
- b. Similarly in many females they experience white discharge. Discharge on the 14 day from the first day of menses is normal as its due to ovulatory phase. However, if the discharge is too profuse and if white discharge continues over a period of time keeping the under garments wet, do not ignore such a complaint and bring it to our notice. The under garments should be dry almost all times and should not be wet due to any reason whatsoever. Chronic white discharge can be completely cured with homoeopathic treatment.

14. **Long lasting Use of Medications:**

- a. **Dusting Powders:** Many individuals are habituated to use dusting powders. Though such a use help in keeping the area dry, long lasting use may lead to side effects of the ingredients of such a powder. Hence it is recommended to avoid such use. Above recommended strategy will cure the fungal infection completely and can help you get rid of the powder.
- b. **Creams:** Few of the patients are ashamed in sharing complaints pertaining to private parts or areas which they cannot reveal for clinical examination. Often such patients are soft targets to public advertisements of creams – “.. खाज खूजली मिटाओ,क लगाओ“, such creams show positive results in initial period yet fail to completely cure the infection. For years together such patients keep on buying such creams and applying them. However, any sort of cream further contributes to wetness of the area aggravating the infection. It is recommended that one should not feel ashamed in front of doctors as such an emotion will create a hurdle in cure of any disease, for that matter.

Once you follow the above recommendations, we are sure you will defeat fungal infections. If in case, you have to share anything based on the above aspects feel free to share. Feel free to share this PDF to all the contacts without altering it.

Though I have written this article clinical experience of Dr. Anjali A. Pradhan is also included in this article. As this article will be shared to almost all our patients, I have used words - we / our earlier in the article.

References:

1. Medical Practice since 23-January-1993 – having treated many patients of fungal infection.

2. Vaginal Candidiasis – An Interactive CD – developed for Pfizer while working as a Project Manager for Indegene Lifesystems Pvt. Ltd. In 2002-2003. Interviewed many doctors to collate clinical data. Out of the doctors, interviewed Dr. Shirish Daftary – Obstetrician and Gynaecologist practicing at Juhu Vile Parle West. He was the one who added many such day-to-day living aspects which are often ignored to the common topic – Vaginal Candidiasis. His thought process further elaborated in my own clinical practice lead to think over many such aspects to have complete cure of fungal infections.
3. JAPI – Journal of Association of Physicians of India - <https://www.japi.org/x27464c4/post-covid-19-mucormycosis-from-the-frying-pan-into-the-fire> - accessed on 9-May-2021 at 10:05 am.

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Jai Bhawani Apts CHSL (Ground Floor),
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Clinic 2

(Functional)
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