

## **10 things to Consider when you have Itchy and Sore 'bits'**



Hi, I'm Becca,

I've been a homeopath for over 15 years and I specialise in gynaecological and hormone issues.

So, if you've signed up to get this guide then I'm guessing you have itchy and sore 'bits' and quite probably are at your wits end with it all. I'm sorry that you have this, I know how much it SUCKS!

I have a diagnosis of lichen sclerosus myself (as well as Crohns disease and Hashimotos Thyroiditis) and before I was diagnosed I had years of itch which I thought was thrush. (see my own story at the back of this guide).

I understand how difficult living with the symptoms can be and how incredibly upsetting especially if you are struggling to get a diagnosis or got on top of your symptoms.

But there is hope and I want to help YOU!

There are many things that can cause the vulva to be unhappy. Read on and see if these considerations can help dial down the soreness and the itch.

**1) Ensure you see your doctor.** Don't do like I did and self-diagnose and self-prescribe for years that your symptoms are thrush. Persist with seeing a doctor and get a second opinion if you are not getting anyway or ask to be seen by a dermatologist. If you have a sore/cut or lump that does not heal then you must get this checked out by a doctor.

**2) Ensure you use correct terminology** for where you are having symptoms when you seek medical advice. Is it inside – i.e the vagina or outside i.e the vulva and the anus? If you go to a doctor and say your vagina is itchy and sore then they might think you have a thrush whereas an itchy vulva could be a variety of different conditions (such as VIN, Lichen Sclerosus, vulvaldynia etc etc).

**3) How Stressed are you?** Aside the vulval symptoms? Stress can be a huge trigger for symptoms starting. I know that might seem weird but symptoms are a sign that the body is struggling. Most of us are very stressed nowadays. What can you do to reduce that? Homeopathy can get to the root cause of what is causing your stress and help you deal with it better. Feel free to talk to me about how I might be able to support you and dial down your stress symptoms.

4) **Consider your diet** – do you notice your symptoms are worse when you eat certain things? Common triggers in order of frequency I see in my practice are :

- a. Gluten – including oats for some people.
- b. Dairy – including butter, yoghurt.
- c. Oxylates – these include spinach (raw and cooked), canned pineapple, many boxed cereals (also can be high in sugar), dried fruit (also can be high in sugar), rhubarb, rice bran, bran flakes, soy flour, brown rice flour, almonds and almond flour, potatoes in all forms, including potato chips, buckwheat groats, beets, Turnips, cocoa powder, and hot chocolate (also can be high in sugar), nut products, such as peanut butter (also can be high in sugar) and Turmeric (also supplements containing curcumin)
- d. Sugar – both natural and processed and High Fructose Corn Syrup.

You could try **keeping a food diary** where you also note down your symptoms on a daily basis to look for any trends. Or you could try an **elimination diet** where you restrict what you eat from the above for a few weeks and then slowly reintroduce individual suspected trigger foods one at a time and observe the results

.Some people also find following the Autoimmune Protocol diet (AIP) helpful.

**5) Consider what you are putting on your body** – do you notice your symptoms are worse when you use certain toiletries? ‘Cleaner’ products; i.e those that are more natural are less likely to cause irritation and itching.

**a. Read labels on products** – check out the app ‘Think Dirty’ for the lowdown on how ‘clean’ your cosmetics are. The more natural the better and the less likely side effects such as irritation and redness. Some toiletries also contain carcinogenic chemicals. It really is worthwhile reviewing what’s in your bathroom cupboard.

**b. Avoid synthetic fragrances** – these can be highly irritating to vulvas.

**c. Avoid petroleum-based products** – many people find petroleum-based products aggravating. It can cause mild irritation, itchiness and redness for some sensitive individuals. Many emollients are petroleum based.

**6) Do check yourself monthly**, so you understand what changes might be happening and to establish your own normal. Push to see a dermatologist if you are still having symptoms and keep a note of any changes you have seen to discuss with your doctor. Changes in ‘architecture’/fusing and/or colour to whiteness can indicate lichen sclerosus.

**7) Consider what you wear next to your skin –** manmade fibres can increase sensitivity and stop air circulating, sweat wicking away etc. Natural cotton underwear (or even pure silk) and not just the gusset may help. You could go one step further and wear unbleached underwear as certain dyestuffs in fabrics especially synthetic fibres can be aggravating. You have probably worked out what clothes you can wear or not but consider this – bulky jean seams or lycra legging for example can aggravate the groin area. Many of my clients when I first see them only wear skirts and often without underwear before we get their symptoms under better control.

**8) Use lubrication during sexual intercourse –** even if you have no vaginal dryness, lubricants will reduce the risk of irritation and tearing. Avoid KY jelly and other petroleum or glycerine containing lubricants as these can be very drying and affect the vaginal PH. YES, produce oil and water-based lubricants that are organic and glycerine free.

**9) Consider a Sitz/Bath Soaks to relieve the most painful and irritating symptoms** – soak for at least 20mins in:

- a. **Oats** in the bath can be soothing (put in an old sock or muslin)
- b. **Epsom Salts** sometimes sold as magnesium sulphate can be soothing.
- c. **Borax** - there is controversy on the use of Borax especially if you are a UK reader. The following recipes come from the Facebook group Sharing is Caring about Lichen Sclerosus et al run by Allicia Mae Cain where many people are getting huge relief and a reduction in their fusing:

**SITZ BATH:** start with 1-2 teaspoons of borax and then slowly move up to 1-2 Tablespoons for each litre or quart of water.

**HALF BATH:** fill up a tub only enough to cover the genital area 2-3 Tablespoons. Soak for a minimum of 20 minutes.

**FULL TUB:** start with 1/8-1/4 cup then move up from there to 1/2 cup.

d. Bicarbonate of Soda.

10) **Find a soothing cream/ointment and moisturise daily** – this can be individual to everyone as some people find some creams irritating while others work well for them and not for others. Most of us put moisturiser on our face and even our bodies but how many moisturise their vulva? As we get older our skin becomes less elastic and supple. Moisturise after a shower/bath to lock in moisture and again before bed.

Creams people like are:

- a. **Weleda Calendula Nappy/Diaper cream** – this is incredibly soothing and healing especially if you have tears. It is also a great barrier cream if urination burns.
- b. **Sea Buckthorn oil** – as an oil or from the capsule. A study into Sea Buckthorn as a supplement found it had a similar efficacy as topical oestrogen on vaginal atrophy.
- c. **Emuaid and Emu Oil** is another commonly used cream.
- d. **Lisepten** – specifically for lichen sclerosus but the ingredients are very soothing for all vulval irritation.
- e. **CBD Oil** – check the amount of CBD in it and also the base cream first.

f. **Coconut Oil** – although this can be drying for some – always apply after a shower to lock in moisture.

g. **CBD and Coconut Oil** combined

h. **Castor Oil** – full of fatty acids essential for maintaining good skin and has anti-inflammatory properties, so can reduce swelling and puffiness.

i. A **natural DIY cream** could be a litre tub of Shea butter, a teaspoon of borage oil and a tablespoon of calendula oil (healing) with chickweed oil for itching. Keep it in the fridge preferably in glass bottles.

Finally, if you have been prescribed steroid cream then **DO NOT suddenly stop using it**. This is so important I am going to add it in as you can get an increase of symptoms due to steroid withdrawal.

If you do decide to reduce using the steroid cream, wean off VERY slowly by mixing the steroid cream with another cream of your choice in gradually reducing amounts and still use daily. If you have a flare, then increase the amount of steroid cream a little and try again. Do not go to once every few days as a way to wean off as you may well flare and not realise that it is steroid withdrawal.

If steroid cream is not working for you then discuss this with whoever prescribed it. Steroid cream can be irritating and increase burning but different brands and ointments vs creams can be more tolerable.

## NEED EXTRA SUPPORT?

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Find out how I can support you with a free discovery call at: [www.healingspaceonline.com/booking-page](http://www.healingspaceonline.com/booking-page)

## **My Lichen Sclerosus Story**

I was first diagnosed with lichen sclerosus 17 years ago after the birth of my second son.

Looking back, I had always had itchy bits for as long as I could remember. Through my 20's I treated myself with over-the-counter yeast medication but I know now that I had no other signs of yeast infection other than itching.

After the birth, the itching became insane and I was unable to control it anymore with the yeast cream. My son had been born in three hours weighing 9 lb 4oz with only five minutes of the pushing stage. That's a lot for the vulva to process in a short space of time and I had grazing and needed some stitches. Afterwards, I had issues and it was discovered that I had been stitched too tightly, although this resolved when I stopped breastfeeding and was thought to be due to oestrogen deficiency. Also, my thyroid medication had been increased during my pregnancy so my hormones were also all over the place. There were also strains in my relationship. I believe that all of this was the perfect storm making my lichen sclerosus go from an occasional irritating itch to another level of insane.

I went to the GPs and got steroid cream which I used occasionally when I was itchy. I don't remember being told about maintenance programmes or following a particular regime. At the time I was training to be a homeopath. I told my homeopath about my diagnosis and was concerned about using steroid cream on such a delicate area.

My homeopath asked me 'why my vagina was angry'. It took me by surprise and I didn't really understand the question but I do now. I was stressed with a newborn and toddler. I had birthed a very large baby in a very short amount of time. I felt alone as I was the first of my friends to have had a second baby and there were relationship issues going on within my family that I found incredibly stressful and upsetting.

The remedies my homeopath prescribed helped my lichen sclerosus and took away the itch. I did not have any flares for years... until my father died. I was hit with injustice and profound grief. I saw my homeopath who gave me a remedy called Nitric Acid. This is for deep indignation and hatred of people who have offended you (which I'm not particularly proud of as I felt that I was very loving and tolerant to everybody) but my vulva had other ideas.

I now find that my LS is my stress barometer especially concerning things that I find an injustice or where I feel indignation. If I can reduce my stress and avoid people and situations that cause me upset then my LS is under control, otherwise I know to take remedies to bring the stress down and avoid another flare.

I also have a diagnosis of Crohn's disease and Hashimoto's Thyroiditis. I find that being gluten and dairy free helps my symptoms of Crohn's disease (and which I have not had a flare in around 15 years) and I wonder if avoiding these had also helped keep my LS in remission. My first dermatologist told me that she saw a lot of LS patients with Thyroid issues as well and it was possibly not a coincidence that my thyroid levels were showing I was hyperthyroid when I had my first flare. Of course, the thyroid being part of the endocrine system is going to be affected by stress too again possibly creating a perfect storm for LS to trigger.

I have worked as a homeopath in the niche of LS for almost 5 years now and I feel privileged to help other people find some resolution with their symptoms and have seen how much change and healing can take place in an area where the medical community offers very little to some people.

I offer a free discovery call where we can discuss how I may be able to help you.

Connect with me at:

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