



# London Health Sciences Centre

## Patient Information

### YEAST OVERGROWTH APPENDIX A

To Be Used with the Patient Information YEAST OVERGROWTH (NS6592)

## Herbal Remedies Commonly Used to Treat Yeast Overgrowth

### Gentian Violet

- Gentian Violet is a purple liquid that is often used to treat yeast overgrowth.
- It can be bought at some herbal stores and pharmacies. Be sure to get an **aqueous** solution at a concentration of no more than 1%. A prescription is not required. Call ahead to ask if it is available.
- Gentian Violet stains skin and clothing. Purple on the skin will usually disappear after a few days.
- It can dry out the mother's skin and baby's mouth. There is also a risk that it can cause sores in baby's mouth, especially if it is used for too long or at a concentration that is too high.
- If your nipples or baby's mouth become irritated, stop using Gentian Violet immediately.

### Suggestions for Use

- It is best to use Gentian Violet at a concentration of 0.25-0.5% for safe treatment of yeast overgrowth. Talk to your health care provider for more information.
- Apply Gentian Violet to one nipple and areola with a clean cotton swab – the nipple and areola will look painted purple. Many mothers will breastfeed their baby right after applying Gentian Violet so baby is also treated.
- Repeat on the other breast.
- Gentian Violet may be applied to the nipples and areola 1-2 times per day for 3-7 days.
- Babies with oral thrush may have Gentian Violet applied directly to the affected areas in the mouth. Mothers may paint any untreated (white) spots in baby's mouth after breastfeeding with Gentian Violet. Dip a clean swab in Gentian Violet and paint on the white patches no more than 1-2 times per day for 3-7 days.
- Talk to your health care provider about combining Gentian Violet with other yeast overgrowth treatments.

### References

- 1) Hale, T., & Rowe, H. (2017). *Medications & Mothers' Milk 2017*, 17th ed. New York, NY: Springer Publishing.
- 2) International Breastfeeding Centre. (2009). Candida Protocol. Retrieved from <http://ibconline.ca/information-sheets/candida-protocol/>
- 3) International Breastfeeding Centre (2009). Using Gentian Violet. Retrieved from <http://ibconline.ca/information-sheets/using-gentian-violet/>
- 4) Walker, M. (2014). *Breastfeeding Management for the Clinician: Using the Evidence*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (p. 498). Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning.
- 5) Wambach, K. (2016). Chapter 9: Breast-Related Problems. In K. Wambach & J. Riordan's *Breastfeeding & Human Lactation*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (pp. 319-357). Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning.

## Grapefruit Seed Extract (GSE)

- Grapefruit Seed Extract (GSE) is a clear, liquid compound made from the seeds and pulp of a grapefruit. GSE is also available in oral tablets or capsules.
- Liquid GSE is becoming increasingly popular to use as a household antifungal cleaner and to treat yeast overgrowth in mothers and babies.
- Some mothers report GSE to be an effective treatment option; however, there is little research available about the use of GSE to treat yeast overgrowth at this time.
- It can be bought at some herbal stores and pharmacies. A prescription is not required. Call ahead to see if it is available.
- The active ingredient on the label must be “**citricidal**”.
- It is reported that GSE may be drying to the nipples/skin and has a bitter taste.
- If your nipples or baby’s mouth become irritated, stop using GSE immediately.
- **Suggestions for Household Use**
- A GSE and water solution may be used as a household surface cleaner. 15-30 drops of GSE in a 32 oz. spray bottle is commonly used.
- GSE may also be used in the laundry to help eliminate yeast. 15-20 drops of GSE in the rinse cycle of wash loads is suggested.

If you are thinking about using GSE on yourself or your baby, **ALWAYS talk to your health care provider** to make sure you know of the potential risks and benefits to make an informed decision.

### Suggestions for Use in Mothers and Babies

Some mothers have used GSE in the following ways to treat yeast overgrowth:

- Combine 5-10 drops of liquid GSE to 1 ounce (30 ml) of distilled water. Mix well.
- Use a clean cotton swab to apply the mixture on nipples and areolas *after* each feeding. Apply the mixture to the baby’s mouth with a clean swab *before* every feeding.
- Use a new swab for each use to reduce the risk of contamination.
- Some mothers treat their nipples and baby’s mouth every hour with the GSE and water mixture during the day.
- If baby has a diaper rash caused by yeast overgrowth, the same mixture of GSE and water may be put into a spray bottle and sprayed on baby’s bottom or swabbed on the diaper area at diaper changes.
- If pain is not improving after 2-3 days, increase to 15-20 drops of GSE in 1 ounce of distilled water.
- Continue to use the GSE and water mixture until breast/nipple pain is gone. Some sources suggest weaning off GSE, continuing to use for several days at increasingly lower doses for a few days after being pain free.
- Talk to your health care provider about combining GSE with other yeast overgrowth treatments.

### References:

- 1) International Breastfeeding Centre. (2009). Candida Protocol. Retrieved from <http://ibconline.ca/information-sheets/candida-protocol/>
- 2) Martin, H. (2015). Grapefruit Seed Extract Uses. Retrieved from <http://www.livestrong.com/article/127592-grapefruit-seed-extract-uses/>
- 3) Taylor, C. (2010). The Identification and Treatment of Thrush. Retrieved from <http://drjaygordon.com/breastfeeding/thrush.html>

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