



EMBARRASSING ISSUES

By Kelly Rose

There are many health issues that we often don't feel confident enough to talk about. These niggling, embarrassing issues can become chronic and affect self-esteem, relationships and, if not dealt with, may lead to the problems getting worse.

It seems silly that although most of us will experience an embarrassing health issue at some point, we are not comfortable talking about it. Let's take a look at some common issues and how they can be dealt with naturally.

Thrush

Thrush is caused by an overgrowth of *candida albicans*. It can occur in the mouth or vagina and also in the gut. Candida is an opportunist; when it sees the possibility to grow, it will. It is important to create an environment where candida will not be able to thrive. Live bacteria such as *lactobacillus acidophilus*, naturally found within the gut, are also present in other areas of the body, such as the vagina. Taking an oral live bacteria supplement to support the gut may be wise. This ensures that you have a good balance and that your immune system is supported.

Some plants may exert natural anti-candida effects and it is a good idea to look at grapefruit seed extract, octanoic acid, pau d'arco and oregano oil. It may also be beneficial to wash with non-perfumed soap and water, or water alone and aim to avoid using highly-scented shower gels, vaginal deodorants or douches. Avoid wearing tight-fitting clothes made of artificial fibres such as nylon, instead wear cotton underwear and loose-fitting clothes.

Smelly feet

Bromodosis is the rather formal name for smelly feet, which is caused by bacteria that are attracted to the sweat on feet. There are many measures that can be taken to avoid foot odour.

Traditional remedies include sodium bicarbonate, which is a natural deodoriser and creates a hostile environment to inhibit bacterial growth. A concentrated solution of alkalisng salts, such as sodium and potassium bicarbonate, can be made up in a spray bottle and applied to clean feet regularly – allow feet to dry before putting shoes and socks back on.

Dabbing vinegar on your feet twice daily for two weeks may be of use as it is thought to dry out the skin so there is less sweat production. Apple cider vinegar can be slightly diluted in warm water and applied to the feet with cotton wool. Hot, tired and smelly feet can be soaked in a bowl of water with 30 drops of grapefruit seed extract. This has the advantage of not only soothing and cleansing the feet but grapefruit seed extract is thought to have natural antibacterial and antifungal actions.

Applying an aloe vera gel to the feet after cleansing can be cooling and soothing. Target hard skin by moisturising the feet before bed with a cream containing MSM.



Halitosis

Bad breath, also called halitosis, may have a number of causes. This includes poor dental hygiene, gum disease and poor digestion. If the mouth odour is down to poor dental hygiene, then focus on brushing your teeth for two minutes twice a day or more. Daily flossing between the teeth helps by removing food particles that may be causing a problem. A natural mouthwash to prevent bacterial build up should be used after brushing. Add a couple of drops of grapefruit seed extract to two tablespoons of water and rinse around the mouth several times before spitting out.

If you suffer from indigestion and bad breath, then poor digestion may be the root cause. It is wise to chew your food well before swallowing and take your time to eat – this enhances digestion. Taking a broad spectrum digestive enzyme can give further digestive support.

Erectile dysfunction

Erectile dysfunction, or impotence, is something most men do not like to talk about, despite the fact that a lot of men will experience it at some point.

There are many factors that may play a role in problems getting, or maintaining, an erection and include damage to the area, stress, anxiety, medication, poor circulation, alcohol, smoking and conditions such as diabetes.

Natural circulatory support may be offered through arginine, an amino acid found in dairy, poultry, nuts and seeds. Arginine has been shown to support nitric oxide, which has the effect of opening up blood vessels. Other nutrients that work towards supporting a healthy circulation include vitamin E, omega 3 fish oils and gingko biloba. Exercise is vital to support a healthy circulation; you should aim to do exercise that raises your heart rate at least three times a week.

If stress is an issue, herbs such as rhodiola, the B vitamins and magnesium can be very supportive. Regular walking, yoga, tai chi and meditation may also reduce stress.

Embarrassing issues don't need to be embarrassing – tackle them naturally and don't be afraid to talk about them.