



YOUR health In The 90's

Self care: a growing trend in the '90s

Women taking a more active role in decisions about health care is one of the most important trends of this decade. It has had a major impact on how they take care of themselves and their present and future families.

According to Doctor G. Lodhy, a physician attached to the Student Health Centre at the University of Waterloo, "women of all ages are certainly

better informed than they were in their mothers' generation about health care, and about the options available to them. As a physician, my role is to help my patients manage their health responsibly; it is a key ingredient in the maintenance of good health."

Just a few years ago, a consultation with a doctor and a trip to the pharmacy to fill a prescription was still required to

effectively relieve minor ailments, such as menstrual cramps and allergies.

Today, switches in the regulatory status of certain classes of safe and effective medication permit the self-selection of products formerly available only by prescription. This phenomenon allows individuals to assume responsibility for care of simple health complaints by responsible and appropriate use of self medication while sparing resources badly needed by other areas of the health care infrastructure.

In the area of women's health, new options for actively participating in personal health

care decisions continue to emerge. For example, access to antifungal medications such as miconazole nitrate to cure vaginal yeast infections—formerly a prescription product—is now a reality in Canada and a toll-free number, 1-800-891-4857, has been made available for all women who would like more information about the non-prescription availability of a cure for recurrent vaginal yeast infections.

Women who have experienced a vaginal yeast infection can and will recognize its recurring symptoms. Convenient access to safe and effective medication will save them time,

dollars and discomfort.

Tips for effective self care

Here are a few tips and suggestions to make self care work best for you:

- Self care does not mean self-diagnosis. When experiencing symptoms of an illness for the first time, always consult a doctor.

- Once the illness has been diagnosed ask your doctor the following questions: How should I treat recurring episodes? Do I need to take medication if I get this again? Do you think this is the best medication for me? What side effects should I watch for?

- Read all package labels and inserts that come with medication carefully and heed any precautionary information.

- Take the precise dose and complete the full treatment.

- If unusual symptoms occur, always contact a doctor as soon as possible.

- Schedule complete and regular checkups as suggested by your doctor.

- Be aware of and familiar with your body. This helps a woman know when something is occurring that is out of the ordinary. A monthly breast self-examination should be performed by all women at the proper time of the month, that is day five to seven of the menstrual cycle.

- STAY INFORMED.
- And remember, keep all medication away from children!

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