Short term oral estriol treatment restores normal premenopausal vaginal flora to elderly women.

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OBJECTIVE: Estriol is an estrogen with considerably weaker stimulatory effects on endometrial proliferation than estradiol. A study was conducted to determine the effects of oral estriol on vaginal flora and endometrial thickness.

METHODS: Fifty-nine postmenopausal women (50-75 years of age), complaining of pruritus or vaginal discharge, participated in the study. Vaginal flora and endometrial thickness were evaluated before treatment and after receiving oral estriol (2 mg/day) for 14 days.

RESULTS: Prior to treatment, lactobacilli were found in vaginal cultures from only six of the 59 study participants, whereas after treatment, the vaginal flora of 27 women showed a presence of lactobacilli (P<0.0001). Endometrial thickness exceeded 5 mm in only five cases. No side effects were reported.

CONCLUSION: Estriol, which has little effect on the endometrium, has the potential to be highly useful for the treatment of atrophic vaginitis. PMID: 11574185