

problems without close supervision by their physician. Xenical is available by prescription only, whereas Alli is the OTC version of this drug. Medication should not be taken more than three times a day or with a meal that does not contain fat. Meals with a high fat content will result in unpleasant GI side effects. Vitamin supplements may be suggested by the physician to compensate for any losses anticipated through use of this medication.



CRITICAL THINKING

What are some lifestyle changes that can lead to reduced weight?

Medications to Treat Hemorrhoids

Hemorrhoids are swollen varicose veins, and they usually occur if the anus, a sphincter at the end of the rectum, becomes irritated. **Fissures** are cracks in the same area. For these irritants, an anorectal preparation is often used to decrease swelling and soothe cracks. An example of a hemorrhoid cream is a combination of pramoxine, phenylephrine, glycerin, and petrolatum (Preparation H), which is applied topically to the hemorrhoids to shrink the swelling. Another medicated cream used for hemorrhoid treatment is pramoxine combined with zinc oxide (Anusol, Tronolane, Tucks). Pramoxine is an anesthetic to numb the pain and itching, whereas zinc oxide is a mineral that promotes healing. Some of these preparations contain lanolin or mineral oil, which act as an emollient to lubricate the anus and makes the passage of stool less traumatic. Anal fissures and hemorrhoids can be treated with rectal suppositories such as hydrocortisone acetate (Anusol-HC). This medication works by suppressing inflammation.

Medications to Treat Flatulence

Flatulence is gas released by the GI tract. Often, flatulence is caused by foods rather than by disease. Patients who complain of flatulence should be cautioned to decrease consumption of cabbage, onions, and beans and to use straws for drinking. Flatulence is more common in patients with air swallowing, diverticulitis, peptic ulcer, irritable bowel syndrome, and dyspepsia. Antiflatulents may also be used with gastroscopy and bowel radiography. The main drug in this class is simethicone (Flatulex, Gas-X, Genasyme, Mylicon). Many of these medications are available OTC, and all are oral medications. (See the Master the Essentials table for a more complete list of antiflatulent medications.) There are no reported adverse effects for this medication.

Medications to Treat Fungal Infections of the Gastrointestinal Tract

Oral candidiasis, **thrush**, is a fungal infection of the mucous membranes of the mouth (Fig. 19-5). Commonly, the only symptom is the presence of thick, white patches on the tongue and cheeks. These patches may extend into the esophagus and become painful and bleed if untreated. Nystatin (Bio-Statin, Mycostatin, Nilstat) is the main drug used to treat thrush. It is available as a suspension or a troche (lozenge). Regardless of the form used, it should be kept in the mouth as long as possible to coat the affected area. Troches should not be chewed or swallowed whole. Intestinal candidiasis is also treated with nystatin, but in tablet form. In this instance, the drugs should be swallowed whole. Because these medications are essentially topical applications and are not absorbed systematically, side effects are not expected to occur.

Medications to Treat Intestinal Parasites

Anthelmintics kill intestinal parasites, such as roundworms (ascariasis, hookworms, pinworms, strongyloidiasis, trichinosis, and whipworms) and tapeworms, by affecting the nervous system of the worm, paralyzing them, or preventing the worm from absorbing glucose. They also prevent newly hatched larvae from growing and multiplying. Roundworms may remain in the intestinal tract or enter other body tissues if untreated. Roundworms and tapeworms are treated with albendazole (Albenza), praziquantel (Biltricide), ivermectin (Stromectol), mebendazole (Vermox), pyrantel (Antiminth, Ascarel, Pin-X), and praziquantel (Biltricide). Laxatives may also be given at the same time to expel the dead parasites. Side effects are abdominal cramps, headaches, anorexia, nausea, and vomiting.