Esophageal candidiasis should be suspected in people with low CD4 count with substernal chest pain, dysphagia, and odynophagia, especially if there is oral thrush present (though the absence of oral thrush does not rule out esophageal involvement). The diagnosis of esophageal candidiasis is often made empirically based on symptoms plus response to therapy. The definitive diagnosis of esophageal candidiasis requires direct endoscopic visualization of lesions with histopathologic demonstration of characteristic *Candida* yeast forms in tissue and confirmation by fungal culture and speciation.

Vulvovaginal candidiasis usually is diagnosed based on clinical presentation coupled with the demonstration of characteristic blastosphere and hyphal yeast forms in vaginal secretions when examined microscopically after potassium hydroxide preparation. Culture confirmation is rarely required but may provide supportive information. Self-diagnosis of vulvovaginitis is unreliable; microscopic and culture confirmation is required to avoid unnecessary exposure to treatment and to assess for other potential pathogens including those that cause sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Preventing Exposure

Candida organisms are common commensals on mucosal surfaces in healthy individuals. No measures are available to reduce exposure to these fungi.

Preventing Disease

Routine primary prophylaxis **is not recommended** because mucosal disease is associated with very low attributable morbidity and mortality and, moreover, acute therapy is highly effective.[12,13] Primary antifungal prophylaxis can lead to infections caused by drug-resistant *Candida* strains and introduce significant drug–drug interactions and QTc (QT corrected for heart rate) prolongation. In addition, long-term oral prophylaxis is expensive. Therefore, routine primary prophylaxis **is not recommended (AIII).** Administration of antiretroviral therapy (ART) and immune restoration is the most effective means to prevent disease.

Treating Disease

Treating Mucosal Candidiasis
Oropharyngeal Candidiasis: Initial Episodes (Duration of Therapy: 7–14 Days) *Preferred Therapy* • Fluconazole 200-mg loading dose, followed by 100–200 mg PO once daily (AI) *Alternative Therapy* • One 50-mg miconazole mucoadhesive buccal tablet once daily: Apply to mucosal surface over the canine fossa (do not swallow, chew, or crush tablet). Refer to the product label for more detailed application instructions. (BI), *or* • One 10-mg clotrimazole troche PO five times a day (BI), *or* • Nystatin suspension 4–6 mL PO four times daily (BII), *or* • Itraconazole oral solution 200 mg PO daily (BI), *or* • Posaconazole oral suspension 400 mg (10 mL) PO twice daily for 1 day, then 400 mg daily (BI), *or*