

About Yeast Infection and Candidiasis - Prevention and Treatments

About causes and symptoms of yeast infection. Also about standard treatment, lifestyle measures and alternative methods to prevent and cure yeast infection.

Yeast infection is the colonization of yeast fungi in body areas in such an amount and such a way that damages or symptoms are produced. Usually the yeast invades only body cavities and the lining of these cavities, but can in serious cases grow into deeper tissue layers.

Yeasts very often infect the vagina and outer female genitals. Yeast infection also often occurs in the mouth, and is then called thrush. The male genitals may be infected, but usually with fewer symptoms. There can also be an infective over-growth of yeast in the digestive tract, skin areas and the nose. Small children often get yeast infection in the diapered area, and this is commonly called diaper rash. Diaper rash can also be caused by irritation from urine or stool, from food allergy, from allergy against washing media, or from a combination of several factors.

Sometimes yeast infect several body areas at the same time, such a systemic infection is often called candidiasis. A systemic yeast infection can develop into a serious condition where the yeast invades deeper layers of the skin, the deeper tissues of several organs and even the blood stream.

Systemic yeast infection usually occurs in patients with bad immune defense, like HIV patients, diabetics or patients weakened by cytostatic or steroid medication.

WHAT CAUSES YEAST INFECTION

Usually species of the genus *Candida*, and especially the species *Candida albicans*, are the infective agents. These yeasts are normally found in the body, but the amount is held down by the normal body chemistry by friendly bacteria inhabiting the skin and body cavities, for example bacteria producing lactic acid (the genus *Lactobacillus*). When the yeast become infectious, it often changes from a round cellular form to a thread-like or branched form that can grow into tissues.

A disturbed bacterial flora in the skin and body cavities can make it easier for the yeast to grow excessively and infect. The skin, the outer genitals and body cavities like the mouth, vagina, and the colon contain the bacterium types *Bifidobacteria* and *Lactobacteria* together with the *Candida* yeasts, but these bacteria hold the growth of the yeast in check.

Use of antibiotics can kill these friendly bacteria and make it easier for the yeast to grow. A too eager use of antibiotics in children can cause a chronic overgrowth of yeasts in the body that will affect the health negatively long into adulthood.

Use of corticosteroids can also make a person susceptible for yeast infection. Asthma patients using inhaled corticosteroids often get yeast infection in the oral cavity.

A too eager hygiene, using bacterial killers, can kill friendly bacteria and cause a yeast infection to occur. However, lack of washing can also cause yeast infection.

If skin areas are constantly held wet or sweaty, *Candida* infections can easily occur, for example in diapered areas of small children or feet covered by tight shoes during long walks.

A diet with an excess of sugar and other carbohydrates may nourish the yeast and cause an infective growth of the yeast.

Mental and physical stress can decrease the effect of the immune defense against yeasts and make a person more susceptible for yeast infection.

THE SYMPTOMS OF YEAST INFECTION

Yeast infection in the female genitals gives itching or burning sensations in the vagina and genital lips, red rashes in the external female genitals and a whitish badly smelling discharge. The discharge may also be the only symptom.

In the male genitals yeast infection often gives itching sores around the base of the penis head. There may also be a smelling whitish fluid substance present that is different in consistence from the white smegma normally produced by glands in the same area. Red rashes with scaling can be present on the outer genitals and especially on the underside of the penis.

In the mouth, yeast infection gives sores covered with a whitish layer that give an itching or burning pain, so called thrush. There can also be white or yellow layers on the tongue without any sores underneath or other symptoms. One often sees cracks at the corner of the mouth.

Yeast infection in skin areas will give symptoms like rashes, itching, sore areas oozing fluid and blisters. The symptom will most often be seen in areas like the under-side of the shoulders, the inner side of the elbow, skin folds, in the pelvic region and other areas that are somewhat hidden.

Yeast infection in the digestive tract can give symptoms in the whole digestive tract from the esophagus to the anus. Symptoms that can occur are problems and pain during swallowing, breast pain, bloating, cramping, excessive gas production, diarrhoea, itching and sores in the rectal opening and lactose intolerance.

An overgrowth of yeast in the digestive tract or a generalized yeast infection produces substances that can poison the whole body, and give symptoms also from body parts that are not directly infected, like: rashes, hives, and itching in the skin, allergic reactions in many body parts, fatigue or lethargy, muscle weakness, bone pain and nervous symptoms.

DIAGNOSIS OF YEAST INFECTION

Yeast infection is often diagnosed by a specimen from the affected area. The specimen is then cultured to investigate the microbial flora. Often bacterial infections give the same symptoms as yeast infection, especially from the vaginal area, and the specimen will also distinguish between yeast infection and bacterial infection.

STANDARD TREATMENT OF YEAST INFECTION

Yeast infection is commonly treated locally at the infected area with anti-fungal substances like clotrimazole (canesten), nystatin, fluconazole, ketoconazole,

tioconazole (GyneCure), terconazole (Terazole), Monazole, miconazole (Monistat, Micozole), butoconazole (Femstat) and gentiana violet.

By vaginal infection tablets, creams or suppositories containing one or more of these substances are usually inserted into the vagina. Men having genital yeast infection or sexual partners of women with infection can be treated with local cream based on the same substances.

Some of the drugs, like fluconazole, are also used orally as a systemic medication.

For more severe infections the substances amphotericin B, caspofungin, or voriconazole is often used.

By localized infection, for example in the vagina, the pharmacological products usually take away the infection very effectively.

These products do not however take away the susceptibility for new infections, and can be less effective when the infection is spread in a more diffuse manner.

Lifestyle measures and natural supplements can be useful to reduce the susceptibility for yeast infection and to help cure yeast infection that is difficult to take away only with standard treatment.

ALTERNATIVE TREATMENT OF YEAST INFECTION

- Garlic helps to kill yeast, and can be used as an oral remedy for yeast infection.
- Flushing with a boric acid solution can help to kill yeast and rinse body cavities. Suppositories containing boric acid can also be used to kill yeast in the vagina or anus.
- Diluted tea tree oil may help for vaginal yeast infection by using it locally.
- The fatty acid caprylic acid can kill yeast, and a supplement of this acid may help against yeast infection.
- Propolis is an antibacterial substance made by bees. An oral supplement or local application of a propolis solution has shown to be useful against yeast infection.
- Cranberry juice helps against bacterial infection in the urinary tract and may also help for yeast infection by making the urine more acidic.
- Lactoferrin is a protein that can bind to iron and hold it away from pathogenic bacteria and yeast, and this will impair the growth of these organisms. The protein is naturally found in milk and in secretions in many parts of the body. It is a part of the natural defense against microbes.
- Products containing seeds for friendly bacteria (Lactobacteria and Bifidobacteria) can help reestablish a normal bacterial flora and be helpful against yeast infection. The friendly bacteria hinder the growth of the pathogenic microorganisms. Such seeds are often called probiotics. There are probiotic products for both oral and local use.
- Yoghourt contains seeds for friendly bacteria. Consuming yoghurt can help to normalize the microbial flora in the digestive tract and in the genital zone. Yoghourt may also be used as a local remedy, for example in the vagina.

LIFESTYLE MEASURES TO PREVENT OR CURE YEAST INFECTION

Many lifestyle measures can be used to prevent the outbreak of yeast infection and help to cure chronic yeast infection.

- One should avoid over-consuming carbohydrates, and avoid consuming carbohydrates that are rapidly taken up or utilized, like pure sugar, refined flour and bread made from refined flour. Instead use of full corn products, beans and peas that contain carbohydrates that are utilized gradually is recommended.
- One should wash or bath daily the whole body, including the genital area, with a mild soap or with pure water.
- One should not use anti-bacterial agents when one washes the skin, the genitals, the rectal opening or by mouth hygiene. For intimate wash, pure water is best.
- Unnecessary antibiotic cures or steroid medication should be avoided.
- Stressful elements and habits in the daily life should be avoided. Meditation is a good method to stress down.
- Clothes and shoes should give ventilation so that humidity does not aggregate at skin surfaces or in skin folds. Humid areas on the skin should be washed and dried regularly when it is not possible to avoid humidity.

Knut Holt is an internet consultant and marketer focusing on health items. TO FIND help for Yeast infection, UTI, acne, eczema, rosacea, scars, wrinkles, other skin problems, over-weight, hypertension, heart disease, allergies, arthritis, joint pain, hypothyroidism, hemorrhoids, depression and more, please visit:-----

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