



July 2011

# Yeast Infection (Candidiasis)

## What is a yeast infection?

Yeast is a fungus. Healthy women have a small amount of yeast in their vaginas naturally. A yeast infection means there is too much yeast growing in the vagina. Yeast is more likely to overgrow under certain circumstances, such as being pregnant, experiencing increased stress, taking antibiotics, using birth control pills, having diabetes or following certain diets.

## How a yeast infection spreads

Yeast normally lives inside the mouth, the vagina and on the skin around the scrotum, penis, labia and upper thighs. It is rarely sexually transmitted.

## Symptoms of a yeast infection

Women may have a thick, white, curdy, odourless, vaginal discharge. They may also have pain during vaginal sex, itching, burning, swelling and redness on the labia or inside the vagina. Men may have itching around the scrotum, redness or swelling at the tip of the penis.

## Diagnosing a yeast infection

A health care provider can sometimes tell if a woman has a yeast infection by looking at the discharge from her vagina. A sample of the discharge can be sent to the laboratory for testing. In men, a health care provider may be able to tell if there is a yeast infection by looking at the infected area on the penis and the scrotum.

## Complications of a yeast infection

There are usually no complications.

## Treating a yeast infection

Women are usually treated with anti-fungal suppositories or cream. The medicated cream or suppositories are inserted into the vagina at bedtime for 3 to 7 nights. Treatment can be used during menstruation. Some yeast treatment medications are available over the counter. Oral medication can be used but must be prescribed.

For men, an anti-fungal cream is used on the infected area. Sometimes repeat treatment is needed.

For further information, please call:  
**York Region Health Connection 1-800-361-5653**  
**TTY 1-866-252-9933 or visit [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca)**

## What about sexual partners?

Sexual partners should be treated if they have symptoms.

## Is follow-up important?

Follow-up is not needed if the symptoms have disappeared.

## Remember:

- if you have symptoms, visit your doctor or a clinic. Symptoms of other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) can be similar to a yeast infection
- follow the treatment as prescribed by your doctor or clinic
- avoid douching. Douching is a way of spraying water into the vagina to clean it. The vagina does not need cleaning. Douching may kill the healthy bacteria inside the vagina and allow other bacteria to overgrow and become an infection
- after passing urine or stools, women should wipe from the front to the back to avoid the spread of bacteria to the vagina and urethra
- use condoms to lower the chance of getting STIs and to prevent pregnancy

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