



August 2011

Candidiasis

(including Thrush)

What is Candidiasis?

Candidiasis is an overgrowth of yeast (fungus) called *Candida*. Candidiasis includes infections that range from mild, such as oral thrush and vaginitis, to systemic and potentially life-threatening diseases. People with severely weakened immune systems such as those with cancer, a transplant or those who have AIDS are more likely to have more serious illnesses.

The *Candida* fungus is present in the intestines of many people without causing illness. Their growth is normally limited by the immune system and by other microorganisms, such as bacteria occupying the same locations in the human body. Treatment with antibiotics can lead to eliminating the yeast's natural competitors for resources and increase the severity of the condition. Young infants and children may develop a rash in the mouth called thrush. It may develop on the skin if large numbers of *Candida* are present or if the skin is damaged.

Symptoms of Candidiasis

Symptoms of candidiasis may vary depending on the area affected. It usually is a very localized infection of the skin or mucosal membranes, including the oral cavity (thrush), the pharynx or esophagus, the gastrointestinal tract, the urinary bladder, or the genitalia (vagina, penis). Frequently there are no symptoms. The most common conditions caused by candidiasis are:

Thrush	Thrush looks like creamy white patches or small red spots on the tongue, roof of the mouth, gums or throat. Crusting on the corners of the mouth is also a symptom of thrush. The patches are not easy to wipe off; vigorous wiping may leave a raw, bleeding surface. Thrush may lead to difficult or painful swallowing and may cause chest pain. It can also cause nausea and make food taste different.
<i>Candida</i> diaper rash	<i>Candida</i> diaper rash tends to be in the deepest part of the crease in the groin and buttock. Usually there are red, moist, weepy skin patches with pustules nearby.
Vaginal yeast infection	It is a common infection and is most frequently seen in a setting of diabetes mellitus, antibiotic therapy and pregnancy. There may be intense itchiness, a thick, clumpy, white discharge, a burning sensation or pain during urination or intercourse. However, scanty discharge may also characterize the infection.

Information sheet

For further information, please call:
York Region Health Connection 1-800-361-5653
TTY 1-866-252-9933 or visit www.york.ca

How Candidiasis spreads

Candidiasis is spread to individuals by direct contact with oral, fecal or vaginal discharge and/or secretions. It may take up to two to five days for someone to show signs and symptoms of candidiasis. A yeast infection may also occur after taking antibiotics due to another unrelated infection.

Treating Candidiasis

Your doctor may prescribe a drug for thrush in the mouth and throat.

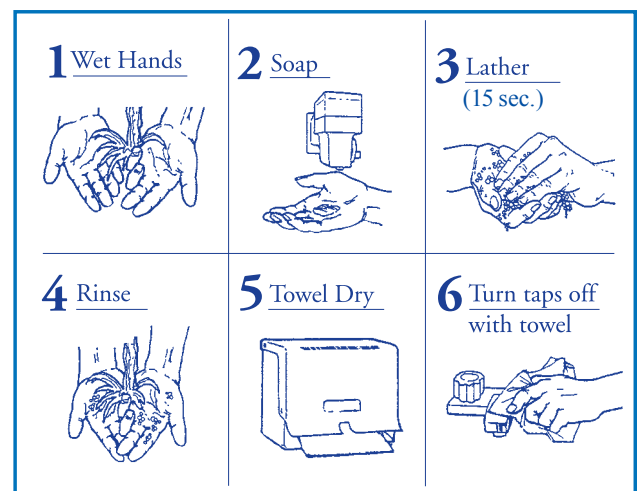
Over-the-counter, non-prescription medications are available for *Candida* diaper rash and for vaginal yeast infection.

Preventing Candidiasis

There is no vaccine for candidiasis prevention. The most effective method of preventing candidiasis is frequent hand washing.

When caring for an infected baby, it is important to:

- Wash hands before and after baby care
- Thoroughly clean items such as pacifiers, bottles, nipples, toys, and teething rings with hot, soapy water and dry completely
- To keep a baby from getting thrush or spreading it to other children, always keep the baby's toys, pacifiers, bottles, etc. away from other children
- Wash cloth diapers in hot, soapy water and rinse completely. Cloth diapers should be washed separately from other laundry
- Avoid unnecessary antibiotics



For further information, please call:
York Region Health Connection 1-800-361-5653
TTY 1-866-252-9933 or visit www.york.ca

