

Lifetime Medical Associates *

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What is candidiasis?

Candidiasis is a yeast infection. Candidiasis can occur in the genital area, mouth, or nails. When it occurs in the vagina, it is known as yeast vaginitis or a yeast infection. In the mouth, candidiasis is known as thrush. When babies get candidiasis in the diaper area, this is known as diaper rash.

Anyone can develop candidiasis. Pregnancy, diabetes mellitus, a weakened immune system, certain medications or birth control pills, and exposure to sexually transmitted diseases can all increase your chances of developing it. People who spend a lot of time with their hands in water are more likely to develop hand candidiasis.

What are the symptoms of candidiasis?

If you have vaginal candidiasis, you may experience intense vaginal itching. You may feel burning when you urinate, and your vagina may have red or white patches on the surface. In women, an odorless cottage cheese-like liquid may come from the vagina.

If you have candidiasis in the mouth, there may be raised white patches inside your mouth or on your tongue. You may have splitting or cracking on the side of your mouth, and your gums may swell or develop red sores.

If you have candidiasis of the nail, you may notice swelling around your nails and a separation between the nail and the cuticle. You may feel pain around the base of your nail. Your nails may turn yellow or blackish brown.



What tests are needed?

The tests depend on where the infection is. Your doctor will take a swab from your genital area or your mouth, or a scraping from your nail, and send it to a laboratory. This is done so your doctor can confirm that the infection is caused by the yeast and prescribe the right treatment.

What treatment is needed?

Your doctor will prescribe an antifungal medication in the form of pills, ointment, vaginal cream, suppositories, powder, or spray. If you have a nail abscess, your doctor may drain it. If you have genital candidiasis, your doctor may want to treat your partner so you don't both spread the infection back and forth.

If the infection doesn't clear up, or if it comes back, your doctor may refer you to a specialist.



Do

- Do keep your genital area clean and wear natural-fiber, loose-fitting underpants if you have genital candidiasis
- Do make sure dentures fit well if you have candidiasis of the mouth
- Do dry your hands well after washing if you have candidiasis of the nail. Don't soak your hands in water
- Do change the baby's diaper often and keep the area dry for diaper rash
- Do keep your genital area clean and wear natural-fiber, loose-fitting underpants if you have genital candidiasis
- Do make sure dentures fit well if you have candidiasis of the mouth
- Do dry your hands well after washing if you have candidiasis of the nail. Don't soak your hands in water
- Do change the baby's diaper often and keep the area dry for diaper rash



Don't

Vaginal candidiasis

- Don't use vaginal douches
- Don't wear tight panty hose
- Don't have intercourse until the infection clears up

Diaper rash:

- Don't put rubber pants on your baby



Recovery time

The symptoms of genital candidiasis will improve one to two days after beginning treatment and the infection will clear up in four to seven days.

Mouth candidiasis will clear up in one or two weeks.

Nail candidiasis requires treatment over three to four months or longer



What can be done to stop it from happening again?

Vaginal candidiasis:

- Lose weight if you need to
- Don't use harsh chemicals, such as douches
- Eat one cup of yogurt daily. The label should say the yogurt contains 'live' or 'active' cultures
- Practice safe sex as you could catch this illness from your sexual partner. Either you or your sexual partner should wear a condom if you think there is any chance of catching an STD

Mouth candidiasis:

- If you wear dentures, make sure they fit well
- If you have diabetes, make sure it is well controlled