

YEAST INFECTION

Yeast, also known as monilia or candida, commonly exists in the vagina. An overgrowth of a fungus, usually candida albicans, may produce symptoms of itching, external burning while urinating, painful intercourse or a thick, curdy discharge. Only one or a combination of these symptoms may exist.

The growth of yeast may be promoted by any condition that changes the balance of the vaginal flora. *Some predisposing factors may be:*

- Antibiotics
 - Stress
 - HIV infection
 - Hormonal contraceptives
 - Diabetes (rare)
 - Pregnancy
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- Yeast overgrowth may also be precipitated by contamination of the vagina from the bowel tract where candida is normally present. It is important to wipe with toilet tissue from front to back.
 - Cotton underwear is recommended rather than nylon. Cotton absorbs moisture, allowing evaporation and ventilation. Nylon keeps the area moist and warm favoring the growth of yeast.
 - It is often recommended that women avoid wearing panty hose all day, tight jeans/slacks, and not wear panties at bedtime.

Treatment

Treatment of symptomatic yeast overgrowth often consists of an antifungal vaginal preparation. You may now purchase, without a prescription, Gyne Lotrimin®* (clotrimazole) or Monistat®* (miconazole) cream for the treatment of vaginal yeast infection. Symptoms will usually abate within a few days, but a full course of treatment, usually a minimum of 3-5 days, is recommended to reduce the chance of recurrence. Oral fluconazole (Diflucan®), available only by prescription, has also been shown to be effective in treating symptomatic yeast.

General Information

In addition to monilia/candida infections, viral and bacterial organisms may also produce discharge, itching, odor, or burning. Viral and bacterial infections will not respond to yeast medications. We suggest that you make an appointment or speak with an advice nurse if your symptoms do not resolve after treatment with a non-prescription yeast medication. After an examination, your clinician will decide if your infection would be treated best with a prescription medication.

- If your symptoms worsen at any time, make an appointment to be seen as soon as possible. Fever, abdominal pain, foul smelling vaginal discharge and /or unusual vaginal bleeding are possible signs of a potentially serious infection.
- To make the diagnosis of infection easier for the clinician, it is important that you do not douche or use any treatments within 48 hours or have intercourse 24 hours preceding your examination.
- No treatment is likely to eradicate all yeast organisms from the body, and symptoms may be more persistent or recur in some women. If you continue to have symptoms after completion of your treatment, make an appointment in the clinic for further evaluation.

* These over-the-counter creams are available at the UHS Pharmacy.

Check our website: www.uhs.berkeley.edu to learn more about this medical concern or others.

For an appointment www.uhs.berkeley.edu or call **510-642-2000** Clinic Nurse **510-643-7197** for advice