

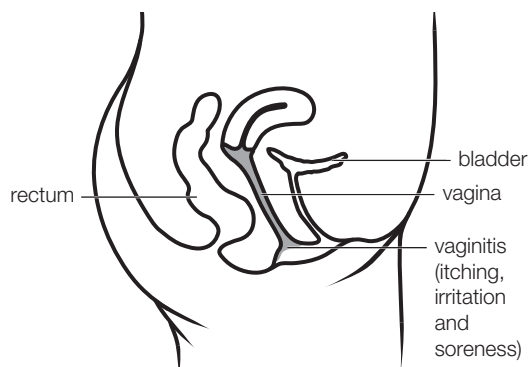
# Vaginal thrush

*Vaginal thrush*, sometimes called 'monilia' or a 'yeast' infection, is a common condition caused by an over-growth of the micro-organism *Candida albicans*.

## What are the symptoms?

### Symptoms around the genital area

- Itching
- Irritation
- Soreness
- Swelling of the vaginal opening



The extent of vaginal thrush

### Other symptoms

- Cheesy-white discharge
- Discomfort during intercourse
- Pain when urinating
- Unpleasant odour (possibly)

## What is the cause?

*Candida* is one of a large number of organisms present in the vagina all the time. These organisms do no harm until something upsets their normal balance (and sometimes that trigger factor is not obvious).

### Factors likely to cause vaginal thrush

- Diabetes
- Treatment with antibiotics or cortisone
- Pregnancy

### Factors that might cause vaginal thrush

- Intercourse
- Oral contraceptives
- An IUD (intrauterine device)

- Tight-fitting jeans
- Nylon underwear
- Leaving on a wet bathing suit after swimming
- Humid weather
- Travel (due to prolonged sitting)
- Obesity

## What is the treatment?

- See your doctor about a vaginal cream or pessary to insert high up in the vagina.
- Bathe the genital area gently 2 or 3 times a day to relieve the discomfort and itching. Use 1 tablespoon of bicarbonate of soda in 1 litre of warm water.
- Dry the genital area thoroughly after showering or bathing.
- Wear loose-fitting cotton underwear.
- Avoid having intercourse while you have thrush.
- Sometimes tablets to take by mouth are prescribed.

## Should your partner be treated?

This is a controversial issue but is not recommended as there is no proven benefit from treating your partner.

## How is it prevented?

- Wash and thoroughly dry the genital area at least once a day.
- Do not wear pantyhose, tight jeans or tight underwear or use tampons. (*Candida* thrives in warm, moist, dark areas.)
- Do not use vaginal douches, powders or deodorants.
- Follow a healthy lifestyle.

## What should you do if the infection keeps returning?

- Are you taking antibiotics? Ask your doctor's advice about the thrush.
- If you are using oral contraceptives, you might have to change to another form of contraception.
- See your doctor about checking your urine for sugar (diabetes) or another infection.