



Yeast Infections

Thrush is caused by an overgrowth of "Candida," a strain of yeast that normally inhabits moist parts of the body, such as the mouth, gastrointestinal tract, and vagina. Under certain conditions it can overgrow and become a problem.

Each of the following may encourage an overgrowth of yeast in the body:

- pregnancy, due to changes in hormones
- antibiotic use, which changes the balance of normal bacteria in the intestines
- fatigue and poor nutrition, both of which stress the immune system

Moist nipples with breastfeeding, especially if there is skin break down, creates an optimal environment for yeast to grow. Cracks in the skin may allow yeast to enter into the breast.

It also can be passed back and forth from mother to baby.

Yeast is difficult to grow in the lab by culture. Therefore, a diagnosis is usually made due to certain symptoms. The overgrowth may clear up quickly, or it may take a concerted effort to decrease the amount of yeast in the body to a normal level.

Symptoms of a yeast infection:

Mom:

- a burning or shooting pain in the nipple or breast during or after nursing or pumping.
 - The pain may radiate to the underarm or back and it may be worse at night.
- a painful latch, after weeks of pain-free nursing
- nipple itching or flaking, redness or shininess, a red or pink rash with small blisters or white spots on the nipple or areola
- a recent or current vaginal infection. It is easy to spread a yeast infection to another part of the body or from person to person, including mother to baby.

Baby:

- white patches in baby's mouth. They look like milk, but may bleed if scraped.
- a bright red diaper rash, which does not go away
- a fussy baby who seems to find nursing uncomfortable. He/she may refuse the breast, come "off and on" frequently, or make a clicking sound when nursing.

Treatment of yeast infection:

- **Treat both mom and baby, even if only one has the symptoms.**
- Reduce dairy, sugar, and alcohol in the diet. These support the growth of yeast in the intestines.
- Mom can take Ibuprofen to help calm the discomfort (up to 800mg every 6-8 hours).
- **Nipple Care:**
 - **Gentian Violet** is sold without a prescription but should be used under the direction of a physician or lactation consultant. Pain relief is usually rapid. **See other side for details.**
 - **All-Purpose Nipple Ointment** can be applied after each feeding or pumping, except when the Gentian Violet is applied. Do not wash it off.
 - **Vinegar** 1 tablespoon can be added to 1 cup of water and the solution applied to the nipples and areola with cotton balls after each feeding. Air dry.

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▪ **Care of items that may be transferring the yeast:**

- Anything coming in contact with mom's nipples needs to **boiled** for 10 minutes daily.
Examples are toys, pacifiers, nipple shields, bottles, pump parts. Discard and replace **pacifiers** and bottle nipples weekly. Pacifiers may promote yeast overgrowth so decrease or stop their use.
- **Wash** cloth diapers, breast pads, and bras in hot, soapy water. Add 1 cup of vinegar to the rinse water. Dry in a hot dryer or the sun or use an iron on the item.
- Consider using paper towels instead of cloth. Wash bath towels after each use.
- Change tooth brushes frequently.
- If any **other family members** have a yeast overgrowth, such as a vaginal infection, jock itch, toe nail infection, or a diaper rash, they may pass it back to you if not treated.

▪ **Medications:**

- **Diflucan** is an anti-fungal pill which requires a prescription. If there is deep shooting pain in the breast, or *Gentian Violet* and nipple ointment aren't working, this might be considered. It should be taken for 2-4 weeks, or at least 1 week after the pain has resolved. Wean off Diflucan gradually.

▪ **Other medications:**

- Yeast Cleanse is a product containing **grapefruit seed extract** which could be tried in addition to the above, if recurrence is a problem.
- **Acidophilus** is a supplement of multi strain lactobacillus which contains helpful bacteria that may limit the amount of yeast in the intestines. A typical dose is 2 capsules 3x/day taken for 2 weeks beyond symptoms, to help prevent recurrence.

$\frac{1}{2}$ % Gentian Violet:

This solution temporarily turns baby's mouth and your nipples purple, and it will **stain** clothing and skin. **It can be purchased without a prescription.**

Treatments are once per day for 3-4 days.

Sometimes a second course of treatment is necessary if the infection recurs.

Treating mom's nipples:

- Dip a Q-tip in the *Gentian Violet* and paint the nipples, plus any pink or inflamed skin around them. Pain is usually improved within hours, and it should be gone by day 3. Stop treatment once the pain is completely gone.
*If there is **NO improvement** after 4 days, stop the *Gentian Violet* and contact your physician.
- You can use **All-Purpose Nipple Ointment** or **Lotrimin (Clotrimazole) Cream** after each feeding, in addition to *Gentian Violet*. Just don't apply the ointment the one time per day that you paint on the *Gentian Violet*. Continue the ointment 2-4 weeks after finishing the *Gentian Violet* treatments to prevent recurrence.

Treating baby's mouth:

- Undress baby to the diaper.
- Apply Lanolin to the outside of baby's lips and to the skin around the mouth to keep the *Gentian Violet* from getting on baby's face.
- Dip a Q-tip in the *Gentian Violet* and paint the inside of baby's mouth to cover the cheeks and tongue. It's OK to let baby suck on the swab.
- *Gentian Violet* can be drying. If baby gets mouth sores, stop the *Gentian Violet*. The sores should clear within 24 hours.