

YEAST INFECTION

WHAT IS A YEAST INFECTION?

A yeast infection arises when too many yeast cells are growing in the mucous membranes. Common places for yeast infections are the vagina, and around the foreskin of the penis. Yeast infections are not usually serious and are easily treated. Yeast normally lives inside your mouth, vagina and on the skin around the scrotum, penis, labia, and upper thighs. It is rarely sexually transmitted.

SYMPTOMS

- Thick, white, clumpy and odourless vaginal discharge
- Pain during vaginal sex
- Itching, burning, swelling and redness inside the vagina, labia or vulva (the area surrounding the vagina)
- Dry, flaky, itchy skin under the foreskin or at the tip of the penis
- Irritation or redness under the foreskin or at the tip of the penis
- Pain when urinating, itching around the scrotum, redness or swelling at the tip of the penis

HOW IT SPREADS

Yeast is a fungus that normally grows in the vagina. Most vaginal yeast infections (about 90 per cent) are caused by a type of yeast called candida albicans. A type of bacteria that lives in our bodies, called lactobacillus acidophilus, helps prevent too many yeast cells from growing. When there is an imbalance of lactobacillus acidophilus, there can be an overgrowth of yeast cells which can cause a yeast infection.

Some common causes of yeast infections include:

- Being sexually active
- Have recently used antibiotics
- Pregnancy
- Corticosteroid use
- Uncontrolled diabetes
- If you have a weakened immune system

DIAGNOSIS

A swab is used to take a sample of the vaginal discharge or urethral area of the penis and is sent to the lab. Test results are usually available within one week.

TREATMENT

Anti-fungal medications are available over the counter at most pharmacies. If you are pregnant, or if your symptoms persist or return in two months, make an appointment with your health care provider or go to a walk-in clinic.

PREVENTION

- Avoid douching; douching sprays water or other solutions into the vagina to clean it and may kill healthy bacteria while allowing other bacteria to overgrow and cause infections
- Avoid feminine hygiene spray, scented soap and bubble baths
- Wipe from front to back after passing urine or stool to avoid spreading bacteria to the vagina and urethra

- Use unscented tampons and/or pads and change frequently during menstruation
- Change out of wet swimsuits or gym/workout clothes as soon as possible
- Eat a healthy diet and limit foods high in sugar
- Wear loose-fitting, cotton clothing

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- sexandu.ca
- York Region Public Health Sexual Health Clinics **1-800-361-5653, # 1**