

THRUSH

(Oral Candidiasis)



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

A fungal infection of the mouth. It is common in newborns and infants. In adults, it is usually a result of an underlying condition.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Patches (plaques) appear in the mouth.
- Patches are white to creamy-yellow, and slightly raised. They are similar to milk curds, but they don't wipe off.
- Usually no pain, but may have mild discomfort.
- If patches are rubbed off, they can leave small, painful ulcers (sores).
- The mouth is dry.
- Infant may have trouble feeding.

CAUSES

A fungus called *Candida albicans*. It is usually present in small numbers in the mouth. Certain factors may cause it to multiply out of control:

- Treatment with antibiotics. This may upset the natural balance of germs in the mouth and allow thrush to develop.
- Birth. Newborns may acquire the infection during passage through the birth canal, especially if the mother has a vaginal yeast infection. Thrush can appear within hours or up to 7 days after birth.
- Aging. Older persons develop thrush because of their lower natural resistance.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Infants.
- People with poor nutrition.
- AIDS. Thrush in adults is part of the criteria used to diagnose AIDS.
- Diabetes.
- Dentures.
- Weak immune system due to illness or drugs.
- Chronic steroid drug use (oral or inhaled).

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Good oral hygiene.
- Avoid antibiotics, unless prescribed for you.
- People at risk for thrush may be prescribed a preventive drug.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Usually clears up in a few days, but it has a tendency to recur.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

Complications are rare. They are more likely to occur in those with underlying conditions.



DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- Your health care provider will do a physical exam of the mouth and ask questions about your symptoms and recent use of antibiotics or other drugs. Medical tests may include a scraping of the patch for viewing under a microscope.
- Treatment is aimed at improving an underlying condition and relieving the symptoms of thrush.
- Brush teeth with a soft toothbrush.
- If an infant has the infection, sterilize any objects that may be placed in the baby's mouth.

MEDICATIONS

- Nystatin oral suspension may be prescribed. Follow instructions that are provided with the product. Mothers who are nursing an infant with thrush should use the prescribed drug on her nipples. This prevents the infection from being spread back to the infant.
- Other antifungal drugs are effective and may be prescribed for adults.

ACTIVITY

No limits.

DIET

No changes in infants. Older children and adults should maintain a good fluid intake with milk, liquid gelatin, ice cream, custard, water, tea, or other beverages and foods that are easy to swallow. Use a straw for drinking if the patches are painful.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of thrush.
- Signs of dehydration (sunken eyes, poor elasticity of the skin, and lethargy) appear in a child.
- Fever develops.

Special notes:

More notes on the back of this page