

Title: Vulvovaginal Candidiasis

Author: Stacy Krueth MS4

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Abstract: Women of child-bearing age who use antibiotics are at a higher risk for symptomatic vulvovaginal candidiasis (a yeast infection) if they use antibiotics for more than three days or have a history of recurrent yeast infections.

This document was created by a medical student enrolled in the Primary Care Clerkship at the University of Minnesota Medical School as part of the course project. The aim of the project is to present information on a medical topic in the format of a patient education handout. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Minnesota Medical School physicians and faculty. These materials are provided for informational purposes only and are in no way intended to take the place of the advice and recommendations of your personal health care provider. The information provided may no longer be up to date since it has not been reviewed since the date of creation. The information provided should not be used to diagnose a health problem or disease, or as a means of determining treatment. In the event of a medical emergency, immediately contact a doctor or call 911.

More information about antibiotics and yeast infections

Many studies have shown an increased likelihood of getting a yeast infection if you are treated with antibiotics for another medical condition.

Some studies have shown that women who are on long courses of antibiotics (>3 days) are at an increased risk for developing a yeast infection.

Women who have a history of multiple yeast infections are also at an increased risk of developing a new yeast infection while they are on antibiotics.

Some studies have shown that taking probiotic supplements and/or eating yogurt frequently while on antibiotics may help prevent developing a yeast infection by keeping the healthy bacteria in your vagina in balance.

If you are prescribed antibiotics for another medical condition and have a history of multiple yeast infections, let your health care provider know.

About 5% of women experience recurrent yeast infections

For more information:

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

Phone number: (800) 762-2264 (for publications requests only)

Internet address:

<http://www.acog.org>

Planned Parenthood Federation of America

Phone number: (800) 230-7526 or (800) 230-PLAN

Internet address:

<http://www.plannedparenthood.org>

Association of Reproductive Health Professionals

Phone number: (202) 466-3825

Internet address:

<http://www.arhp.org>

National Women's Health Resource Center

Phone number: (877) 986-9472

Internet address:

<http://www.healthywomen.org/healthtopics/yeastinfections>

Developed by Stacy Krueth MS4



Vulvovaginal Candidiasis

What you need to know

University of Minnesota
Primary Care Clerkship
Patient Education Tool

What is Vulvovaginal Candidiasis?

Vulvovaginal Candidiasis is more commonly known as a “yeast infection”. Yeast infections are the second most common cause of vaginal discharge in the United States.

Yeast infections are often caused by a microorganism called Candida. This yeast is commonly found in healthy women and does not cause any problems.

There is a balance between healthy bacteria and unhealthy bacteria in a woman’s vagina. If this balance is upset, Candida can grow to outnumber the healthy bacteria and a woman may experience symptoms of a yeast infection.

Yeast infections are NOT considered STDs; even women who are not sexually active can get a yeast infection.

Symptoms

- irritation and/or itching of the genital area
- inflammation of the genital area
- Vaginal discharge
- foul vaginal odor
- discomfort of burning with urination
- pain or irritation with sexual intercourse



Risk Factors

- birth control pills
- antibiotics
- pregnancy
- diabetes
- deodorant tampons or perfumed douches
- tight clothing or synthetic underwear
- HIV infection

Do I have a yeast infection?

If you have any of the symptoms of a yeast infection, to know for sure if you have a yeast infection, you should visit a healthcare provider. You will need a pelvic exam and have a sample taken of your discharge for microscopic evaluation. Other medical problems can present similarly to a yeast infection but will not respond to the medicine used to treat yeast infections, which is why you need to visit a healthcare provider.

Yeast infections are curable

Treatment

Yeast infections can be cured. Options include antifungal creams or suppositories that are applied inside your vagina usually for 3-7 nights. Your healthcare provider can help you decide. Many are available over the counter without a prescription. If you would rather take a pill by mouth, you may ask your health care provider for a pill called fluconazole.

Prevention

Keeping a normal, healthy balance of bacteria in your vagina can help prevent yeast infections. This means keeping your genital area clean and dry, wearing cotton underwear and loose-fitting pants to prevent your genital region from becoming too hot or moist (which is the environment yeast like to grow in). Also avoid douches and other feminine hygiene products.

Even with these measures, you may still get another yeast infection but the above tips should help prevent this.