

Title:

Regular consumption of yogurt containing *Lactobacillus acidophilus* may have a prophylactic effect against recurrent vulvovaginal candidiasis in susceptible women.

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Abstract:

There is frequent discussion in the popular media as well as within the medical community regarding the consumption of "active yogurt cultures" as a means of preventing recurrent yeast infections. Women of all ages may suffer from frequent vaginal yeast infection, and the question "should I be eating yogurt" often comes up during visits to the doctor's office. In short, it appears that eating yogurt which contains the bacteria *Lactobacillus acidophilus* ("active yogurt cultures") does in fact reduce the frequency of vaginal yeast infections in susceptible women. It is an easy way to combat yeast infections, and may delay or eliminate the need for long-term anti-fungal medications.

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PREVENTION

To help prevent future vaginal yeast infections, try the following:

- Don't use douches.
- Avoid scented hygiene products like bubble bath, sprays, pads and tampons.
- Change tampons and pads often during your period.
- Don't wear tight underwear made of synthetic fibers.
- Wear cotton underwear and pantyhose with a cotton crotch.
- Change out of wet swimsuits and exercise clothes as soon as possible.

If you have repeat yeast infections, talk to your doctor.



WHAT IS A YEAST INFECTION AND WHAT CAN I DO TO PREVENT THEM?



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WHAT IS A YEAST INFECTION?

A vaginal yeast infection is irritation of the vagina and the area around the vagina, called the vulva. It is caused by an overgrowth of the fungal organism called *Candida albicans*. Yeast normally live in the vagina in small numbers, but when the bacteria in the vagina become out of balance, too many yeast grow and cause an infection.

Vaginal yeast infections are very common. About 75 percent of women have a yeast infection during their lives.

SYMPTOMS

Extreme itchiness in and around the vagina.

A thick, white vaginal discharge that looks like cottage cheese

Pain or discomfort during sex

Pain during urination

Burning, redness, and swelling of the vagina and the area around it

You may only have a few of these symptoms and they may be mild or severe

DIAGNOSES

You should see a doctor to know for sure if you have a yeast infection, especially if you've never had one before. The signs of a yeast infection are similar to those of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) like chlamydia and gonorrhea, so it's hard to be sure you have a yeast infection and not something more serious.

POSSIBLE CAUSES

- Diabetes
- Pregnancy
- Antibiotic Use
- Birth Control Pills
- Cuts /abrasions in the genital area
- Poor hygiene
- Douching
- High sugar diet

TREATMENT

- Vaginal yeast infection may be treated with antifungal medications that are applied topically in and around the vagina or with antifungal medications taken by mouth. These treatments can be prescribed by a doctor or bought over the counter.
- There is some evidence that daily consumption of yogurt containing the bacteria *Lactobacillus acidophilus* can help prevent recurrent yeast infections.
- If you are pregnant, don't use medicine for a yeast infection without talking to your doctor first.