

What is a yeast infection?

Yeast infections are caused by a fungus called *Candida albicans*. These infections can present in a variety of forms. Yeast infections in women can infect the vagina, called vaginitis. Thrush causes mouth infections in young infants and can also be a presenting sign of HIV infection in adults. *Candida* also may be the cause of many types of diaper rash in young children.

Who is at risk for a yeast infection?

Anyone can get a yeast infection.

What are the symptoms of a yeast infection?

Candida diaper rash:

- The diaper area is red.
- The redness is worse in the creases.
- Redness is often bordered by red pimples.
- Rash may have a shiny appearance.
- Sores or cracking or oozing is present in severe cases.

Thrush

- White patches appear on the inside of cheeks and gums and tongue.
- Thrush usually causes no other signs or symptoms.

Vaginitis

- Vaginal irritation, intense itchiness and vaginal discharge.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Incubation period is unknown.

How is a yeast infection spread?

- The fungus is present in the intestinal tract and mucous membranes of healthy people.
- A warm environment allows for growth and spread.

- Person-to-person transmission may occur from a woman to her infant when the mother has a yeast infection in her vagina and in breastfeeding mothers whose babies with thrush infect the mothers' nipples.

When and for how long is a person able to spread the disease?

A person can spread disease as long as the infection is present.

How is a person diagnosed?

A person is diagnosed by the clinical appearance of the rash.

What is the treatment?

See your health-care provider as soon as symptoms appear for treatment options. Prescription medications are available to treat the infection. Some over-the-counter medications are available to treat diaper rash and vaginitis.

Does past infection make a person immune?

No.

Should children or others be excluded from child care, school, work or other activities if they have a yeast infection?

No.

What can be done to prevent the spread of yeast infections?

- Infants and toddlers should not share pacifiers, bottle nipples, teething rings, etc.
- Thoroughly clean contaminated article such as pacifiers, bottle nipples, toys, teething rings, etc., with hot soapy water.
- Wash your hands.
- If breastfeeding, see your health-care provider for treatment.
- Treatment of vaginal yeast infections in pregnant women may prevent the spread to the newborn infant.

Additional Information:

Additional Information is available at www.ndhealth.gov/disease or by calling the North Dakota Department of Health at 800.472.2180.

Resource: American Academy of Pediatrics. In: Pickering LK, Baker CJ, Kimberlin DW, Long SS eds. *Red Book: 2015 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases*. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; 2015:[275-280]