

Candidiasis (Yeast Infection) What You Need to Know

What is Candidiasis?

Candidiasis or “yeast infection” is a common type of vaginitis. It is an infection of the vagina.

It is normal for a woman to have some clear or white discharge from her vagina. When she has vaginitis, this discharge changes. There may be more of it, or it may have a different color or smell.

If you have candidiasis, you may have these signs:

- A white discharge
- Itching and a rash around your vagina
- Itching and burning around your vagina after sex
- Burning pain when you urinate

How did I get it?

It is normal to have some yeast living in your vagina. But if the yeast grows too much, you can get an infection.

This can happen:

- If you are pregnant.
- If you wear tight nylon underwear or pantyhose.
- If you are taking some medicines, like antibiotics.
- If you have diabetes or other health problems.

You can't tell by looking at a woman if she has a yeast infection. The only way to know if you have it is to be tested by a health care provider.

What should I do?

Get treated.

Your Family PACT provider will give you a pill to take or medicine that you put in your vagina. This will cure the infection. Keep using your medicine even if you have your period.

If you think you may be pregnant, tell your provider before you start your treatment.

Follow all of your Family PACT provider's instructions.

- Use all of the medicine to treat the infection, even if the symptoms go away.
- Do not douche. The vagina keeps itself clean on its own. Douching or washing out the vagina will not cure this infection and may make you more likely to get it again.

Return to your Family PACT provider:

- If you used all of your medicine but the infection did not go away.
- If your infection goes away and then comes back again.

Why should I get treated?

It is important to get treated for the yeast infection. If you don't, your symptoms will keep making you uncomfortable.

Protect yourself!

- **Wipe yourself from front to back after going to the bathroom.** This helps keep germs from your anus away from your vagina.
- **Keep clean, but don't clean inside your vagina with a douche.** Douching can wash away what the vagina needs to keep healthy.
- **Use cotton underpants.** Don't wear tight pantyhose. This helps to keep you cool and dry.
- **Always use a male or female condom when you have sex.** This can help keep you from getting vaginitis and other kinds of infections.
- **Ask your Family PACT provider about getting an HIV test.** You have a greater chance of getting HIV (the virus that causes AIDS) when you have a yeast infection.
- **Ask your provider where you can get vaccines** that help protect against Hepatitis B and HPV infections.

Resources

To learn more about yeast infections, call the CDC toll-free hotline at 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636).

For information about the Family PACT program and providers near you, call 1-800-942-1054 or visit www.familypact.org.