



What is yeast overgrowth?

There is yeast in the vagina and gut, along with other helpful bacteria. Too much yeast can cause some discomforts. This is called a yeast overgrowth or a yeast infection. About 75% of people with vaginas will have at least one yeast overgrowth in their lifetime. About 45% will have two or more, making yeast a common concern for people.

How can I tell if I have a yeast overgrowth?

You may notice changes like:

- » more, thicker or clumpier vaginal discharge (fluid from the vagina) than usual
- » itching, dryness, a burning feeling, or discomfort in or around the vagina

What causes yeast overgrowth?

Yeast overgrowth is an increase in the normal amount of yeast that occurs naturally. Some possible causes:

- » stress
- » high sugar diet
- » medications (antibiotics, steroids, birth control pills)
- » hormone changes during the menstrual cycle, pregnancy, or menopause
- » wiping from back to front after using the toilet
- » wearing underwear made of synthetic fabric
- » wearing tights, pantyhose & leggings for too long (especially if not cotton)
- » wearing tampons for too long
- » using tampons more absorbent than needed for current menstrual flow
- » frequent use of pads or liners for vaginal discharge
- » repeated douching
- » sexual intercourse
- » scented toilet paper, powders, and menstrual products

Can penises have yeast overgrowth?

Yes. People with penises often have no symptoms, but may notice a rash or itching of the penis or genital area.

Do I need to see a health care provider for yeast overgrowth?

If you know your body well and had a yeast overgrowth before, you can treat it yourself.

See a healthcare provider if you've never had yeast overgrowth or if your symptoms continue a week after treatment.

If you are not sure if you have a yeast overgrowth, do not douche or treat it yourself before being examined. It can interfere with the exam or test results.

How is testing done?

A healthcare provider can do a pelvic exam and take a sample of the discharge. They will send the sample to a lab. Sometimes they can tell you after the exam.

How is yeast overgrowth treated?

Over the counter (OTC) treatment

Over the counter means you can buy it without a prescription. You can buy anti-yeast creams or capsules at most grocery and drug stores.

Brand names: *Monistat*, *Canesten* and *Gynecure*.

No-name brand cream: clotrimazole or miconazole

Probiostat is an anti-fungal treatment to restore normal levels of vaginal bacteria. You do not need a prescription but a pharmacy may have to order it for you. Ask your healthcare provider for the order number. Insert one capsule into the vagina at bedtime every night for 10 nights.

Prescription treatment

A healthcare provider must write a prescription for these types of medicine. Some names are Gynezoole 1 (single dose cream) and Terazol (cream, or both in a dual pack). It is used for 3 or 7 days.

Important notes about anti-yeast or anti-fungal treatments:

- » Tell your healthcare provider if you are pregnant or think you might be.
- » Vaginal treatments can break down latex and make condoms or diaphragms less effective.
- » Medications with warfarin (a blood thinner), and anti-fungal or anti-yeast medications can cause bruising and abnormal bleeding. Check with your healthcare provider before using them.

How can I reduce the discomforts of yeast overgrowth?

- » Avoid over-cleaning the vaginal area.
- » If you have pain during sexual intercourse, wait until things are back to normal or use a water-based lubricant.
- » To relieve a swollen or painful vaginal area, sit in cool water or apply a cold pack.

Recurrent Yeast Overgrowth

Some people (less than 5%) have recurrent vulvovaginal candidiasis (RVVC). If you have four or more yeast infections within one year, see a healthcare provider to get a prescription for anti-fungal cream or oral tablets.

Want more information?

- » Visit: <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-topics/hw61044>
- » Visit: <https://www.islandsexualhealth.org/infections/yeas/>
- » Visit: <https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/health-wellness-care/diseases-medications-vaccines/y>
- » Call HealthLinks at 204-788-8200 or toll-free 1-888-315-9257.

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