

# yeast infections

## What is a yeast infection?

- Yeast is a fungus that normally lives in small amounts in the vagina\*, penis\* and mouth. If too much yeast grows, it can lead to a yeast infection in those areas.
- Yeast infections are very common. They can be uncomfortable, but they are not harmful to your health.

## How do you get a yeast infection?

- Although yeast infections are common in people who have sex, a yeast infection is not a sexually transmitted infection (STI).
- Factors that can cause yeast to overgrow include:
  - douching;
  - taking antibiotics or other medications;
  - hormonal changes (such as pregnancy, changes in your fertility cycle);
  - menstruation (your period);
  - using hormonal birth control methods such as the pill, patch or ring;
  - using diaphragms, sponges or spermicides;
  - and/or having a weakened immune system.

\*We know that these aren't the words everyone uses for their bodies (e.g. trans folks), and support you using the language that feels best for you.

## For youth ages 13-29

### Planned Parenthood Toronto Health Services

Offers drop-in and scheduled appointments  
Call 416-961-0113 or visit [www.ppt.on.ca](http://www.ppt.on.ca)

## For youth ages 13-19

### Teen Health Source

Offers anonymous and confidential sexual health information for teens by teens.  
Text (647) 905-6455, call (416) 961-3200, email [teenhealthsource@ppt.on.ca](mailto:teenhealthsource@ppt.on.ca)  
Chat online and visit [www.teenhealthsource.com](http://www.teenhealthsource.com)

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### **How do you know if you have a yeast infection?**

- Symptoms can vary depending on where the yeast infection is.
- Many people do not have any symptoms.

#### ***Vagina:***

- Discharge from your vagina that is thick and white, almost like cottage cheese
- Itching, swelling, or red colour inside and outside your vagina
- Pain when you have sex
- Burning when you urinate (pee)

#### ***Penis:***

- Itching, rash, swelling, or red colour on the tip of your penis
- Pain when you have sex
- Burning when you urinate (pee)

#### ***Mouth:***

- White coating on the tongue
- Inflammation in the mouth

### **How can you get tested for a yeast infection?**

- A clinician can test you by examining your vagina, penis or mouth.
- Because the symptoms of yeast infections can be similar to other infections, it is important to get tested to ensure you get the correct treatment for the infection you have.

### **What if you test positive for a yeast infection?**

- If you are not sure if you have a yeast infection or this is your first one, see your clinician.
- Yeast in your vagina, penis or mouth is not harmful and will usually go away on its own. You only need to treat a yeast infection if the symptoms are bothering you.
- You can buy antifungal cream or vaginal suppositories (capsules that get inserted into the vagina) to treat a yeast infection from a pharmacy. You do not need a prescription to buy them.
- There is also a one dose oral pill which you can take to clear up the infection. You do not need a prescription to buy this pill.

- If you feel better, you don't need another test.
- If you have done one round of treatment and your symptoms have not gone away, see your clinician.

### **How can you lower your risk of getting yeast infections?**

- Do not use pads, tampons, or bath products that are perfumed or coloured.
- Wear unbleached, cotton underwear during the day. It's better not to wear underwear when you sleep.
- Avoid tight fitting pants, tights or nylons.
- Do not wear panty liners/pads daily if you are not actively bleeding
- Do not douche or use feminine hygiene sprays, wipes or soaps. Your vagina cleans itself.
- Change out of your wet bathing suit or sweaty exercise clothes as soon as possible.
- Avoid lubricants that are made from glycerin. Glycerin may contribute to yeast overgrowth.
- Get plenty of sleep, exercise, and healthy foods. This will help keep your immune system strong to prevent yeast infections.
- Using probiotics (good bacteria) either orally or vaginally may help prevent yeast infections. Probiotics can also be helpful when you are taking antibiotics. Talk to your clinician or visit a health food store for more information.
- Yeast infections are not usually sexually transmitted. However, if you keep getting yeast infections, encourage your partner(s) to see their clinician for possible treatment.