

## SEE YOUR DOCTOR!

You can get treatment for Thrush straight from your pharmacy without seeing a doctor.

Treatment options include anti-fungal creams, pessaries or oral capsules. All of the available treatments work by stopping the growth of Candida without affecting the 'good' bacteria that is naturally present in the vagina.

*It is important to note that some vaginal creams and pessaries may weaken the latex of rubber condoms.*

### However, you should seek your doctor's advice if:

- It is the first time you have ever experienced abnormal vaginal discharge
- This is your third time getting vaginal thrush within six months
- You are or could be pregnant
- You are under 16 or over 60 years of age
- You have had unprotected sex
- You have pain, fever or feel unwell
- Your symptoms have not improved after 3-4 days of treatment



### Informing Patients Pamphlet series

#### **SANITAS Hospitals Ltd**

P O Box 60255, Mwai Kibaki Rd,  
Mikocheni B, Dar es Salaam TZ

Mob 1: +255 688 863 035

Mob 2: +255 678 284 799

Email: [kuuliza@sanitashospital.co.tz](mailto:kuuliza@sanitashospital.co.tz)

Web: [www.sanitashospital.co.tz](http://www.sanitashospital.co.tz)

## THRUSH

### Vaginal Candida

*Vaginal thrush is caused by a fungal infection with candida and is a very common infection for women. It is estimated that 75 percent of all women will experience a thrush infection at least once in their lives.*





## What is Thrush?

Vaginal thrush is caused by a yeast infection inside the vagina, usually by *Candida albicans*. It is a very common infection for women.

It is estimated that 75 percent of all women will experience a thrush infection at least once in their lives. It is also important to realise that candida may be present in the vagina in approximately 30% of woman and cause no symptoms at all, as the amounts are small and held in balance by the natural acidity of the vagina.

Other bacteria called lactobacilli are normally present in the vagina and they maintain the vaginal secretions slightly acid, which does not favour the growth of candida.

Thrush is caused by an overgrowth of yeast in the vagina. It is not a sexually transmitted disease, but sexual intercourse can irritate the vagina, causing the condition. Sperm is also alkaline (opposite of acid) and thus favours the growth of candida.

A virgin could have a thrush infection. Babies can sometimes get a mild thrush infection in their mouths or on their bottoms. It is not a shame to have a thrush infection!

“You have done nothing wrong to get a thrush infection, nearly 75% of all women will have a thrush infection sometime in their lives”

## What causes Thrush?

Vaginal thrush is a common condition caused by an overgrowth of a yeast, called *Candida albicans*, which normally inhabits the gastrointestinal tract, skin and vagina. There are many factors that may trigger an attack of vaginal thrush:

- A weakened immune system
- Antibiotic treatment
- Before or after your period
- Emotional or physical stress
- Hot weather
- Increase in blood sugar levels
- Medical conditions such as diabetes or HIV
- Oral contraceptive pill
- Pregnancy or menopause
- Skin conditions such as eczema or dermatitis
- Tight clothing that promotes excessive sweating, eg spandex, synthetic underwear
- Vaginal deodorants, soaps or bath salts

## What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of vaginal thrush may include:

- itching, soreness and/or burning discomfort in the vagina and vulva
- Stinging when passing urine (dysuria)
- Vulval oedema, fissures and excoriations
- Heavy white curd or cottage cheese-like vaginal discharge
- Bright red rash affecting inner and outer parts of the vulva, sometimes spreading widely in the groin to include pubic areas, groin and thighs.

Symptoms may last just a few hours or persist for days, weeks, or rarely, months, and may be aggravated by sexual intercourse

## Tips to prevent Thrush

The best way to prevent thrush is to identify what triggers the condition for you. It may be helpful to:

- Always wipe from front (vagina) to the back (anus) after urinating
- Avoid deodorised panty shields, bubble bath solutions or vaginal douches
- Avoid spermicidal condoms and use only water-based lubricants
- Avoid use of soap, deodorants or talcum powder on skin around the genitals
- Take probiotics whenever you are prescribed antibiotics
- Wear loose cotton underwear and avoid tight clothing