

Patient Information:

- ◆ Causes
- ◆ Symptoms
- ◆ Prevention
- ◆ Treatment Options

## Vaginal Yeast Infections

Yeast is one of the most common causes of vaginal infections. Yeast infections occur when a fungus called *Candida albicans*, normally present in small numbers inside the vagina and on the skin, multiplies to abnormally high levels inside the vagina.

### CAUSES

- ◆ Some antibiotics may decrease the normal protective bacteria in the vagina, which creates an imbalance and promotes yeast proliferation.
- ◆ Excessive fatigue, stress, or illness may lower the body's ability to control excessive yeast growth.
- ◆ Tight clothing (including jeans and panty hose), wet bathing suits, wet exercise clothes, & daily use of mini-pads or powders hold moisture in the vagina that can promote the growth of yeast.
- ◆ Wiping from back to front after using the bathroom may spread yeast from the rectal area to the vagina where it can grow.
- ◆ Douching flushes normal protective bacteria from the vagina leaving it vulnerable to yeast proliferation.
- ◆ Diabetics have more circulating blood sugar which may promote more frequent yeast infections.
- ◆ Pregnancy and diet may also cause yeast infections.

### SYMPTOMS

- ◆ Vaginal itching, burning, or irritation
- ◆ White, or pale-yellow discharge, which may be thick, clumpy, and cottage cheese-like, and may have a yeasty smell
- ◆ Painful intercourse
- ◆ Painful urination especially when urine hits the outer vaginal area
- ◆ Swelling and or redness of external vaginal area
- ◆ May flair prior to menstrual period

- ◆ Symptoms may differ with recurrent infections

### PREVENTION

- ◆ Either sleep without underwear or wear loose, 100% cotton boxer shorts.
- ◆ Wear cotton crotch underwear.
- ◆ Don't douche. Gravity naturally cleanses the vagina.
- ◆ Don't wear mini-pads unless menstruating.
- ◆ Don't stay in tight, wet clothing for long periods of time.
- ◆ Don't use powders, "deodorant sprays," or scented tampons.
- ◆ Wipe from front to back after using the bathroom.
- ◆ Eat 1 cup of "live culture" yogurt each day especially when taking antibiotics.
- ◆ Decrease your intake of sweets if infections are recurrent.

You may choose self treatment for yeast infection symptoms without seeing a gynecologist. However, if your symptoms recur or do not respond, we recommend that you see a practitioner to rule out other infections. If you have any further questions call the Women's Clinic at 231-6569

### TREATMENT OPTIONS

There are multiple products available without a prescription. Some examples include:

- ◆ **MONISTAT 1®** night cream
- ◆ **MONISTAT 3®** night suppositories
- ◆ **MYCELEX G 7®** night cream
- ◆ **GYNE-LOTRIMIN 7®** night cream
- ◆ **FEMSTAT 3®** night cream
- ◆ **VAGISTAT-1®** night gel

For the most part, the above products are equally effective. Choose one based on personal preference. "Quicker" treatments usually cost more. Pharmacies carry generic yeast infection medications which are less

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expensive and equally as effective as name brands. If you choose a generic, look for one that contains one of the following active ingredients, **Butoconazole, Miconazole, or Clotrimazole.**

We recommend that you **DO NOT use Yeast-Gard®, Yeast-X® and Vagisil®**, because they do not contain ingredients that kill yeast!

**Diflucan**, one time dose oral medication, is available by prescription only. Talk to your health care provider for more information.