

YEAST INFECTION (CANDIDIASIS)

Candida can normally be found on the skin and in the mouth, throat, intestinal tract, and vagina of healthy people. In children, yeast infections are commonly found in the mouth or throat (thrush) or the diaper area.

CAUSE *Candida albicans*, a fungus.

SYMPTOMS **Thrush** - White, slightly raised patches on the tongue or inside the cheek.
Diaper Rash - Smooth, shiny "fire engine" red rash with a raised border.
 Children who suck their thumbs or fingers may occasionally develop *Candida* infections around their fingernails.

Under certain conditions, such as during antibiotic use or when skin is damaged and exposed to excessive moisture, the balance of the normal, healthy skin germs is upset. Therefore, yeast that normally live on the skin can overgrow and cause yeast infections. Most of the time these infections heal quickly, but sometimes illness can occur in infants, persons with weakened immune systems, or those taking certain antibiotics.

SPREAD Rarely, by contact with skin lesions and mouth secretions of infected persons or asymptomatic carriers. Most infants who have *Candida* got it from their mother during childbirth.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, outbreaks of thrush in childcare settings may be the result of increased use of antibiotics rather than newly acquired *Candida* infections.

INCUBATION Variable. For thrush in infants, it usually takes 2 to 5 days. For others, yeast infections may occur while taking antibiotics or shortly after stopping the antibiotics.

CONTAGIOUS PERIOD Contagious while lesions are present. Most infections occur from yeast in the person's own body.

DIAGNOSIS Recommend parents/guardians call their healthcare provider to identify the fungus.

EXCLUSION Childcare and School: None.

TREATMENT Anti-fungal medication may be prescribed.

PREVENTION/CONTROL

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water after contact with secretions from the mouth or nose or the skin in the diaper area. **Thorough handwashing is the best way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.**
- Minimize contact with secretions from the nose or mouth of infected persons.
- Dispose of used tissues.

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PREVENTION/CONTROL (CONTINUED)

- Clean and sanitize mouthed toys, objects, and surfaces at least daily and when soiled.
- Clean and sanitize bottle nipples and pacifiers daily.
- Recommend parents/guardians replace bottle nipples and pacifiers after treatment.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Kentucky Department for Public Health Frankfort, KY
Kentucky Regional Poison Center Louisville, KY
Lake Cumberland District Health Department Somerset KY
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Atlanta, GA

<http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/>
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www.lcdhd.org (606) 678-4761
Toll free: 1-800-311-3435 www.cdc.gov