

THRUSH

Thrush is caused by a yeast that normally lives harmlessly on the skin, or in the mouth, gut and vagina, without causing any problems. It is not necessarily transmitted sexually, but having sex can cause an irritation that may result in thrush.



		<p>Woman's sexual organs (front)</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>1 Ovaries</td> <td>4 Cervix</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2 Fallopian tubes</td> <td>5 Vagina</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3 Womb</td> <td>6 Entrance to vagina</td> </tr> </table>	1 Ovaries	4 Cervix	2 Fallopian tubes	5 Vagina	3 Womb	6 Entrance to vagina						
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SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Normally, thrush is kept in check by harmless bacteria. Occasionally conditions change and the yeast increases rapidly causing symptoms including:

Women

- Itching, soreness and redness around the vagina, vulva or anus.
- A thick, white discharge from the vagina that looks like cottage cheese and smells yeasty.
- A swollen vulva.
- Pain when you have sex.
- Pain when you pee.

THRUSH

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS (cont')

Men

- Irritation, burning or itching under the foreskin or on the tip of the penis.
- A redness, or red patches, under the foreskin or on the tip of the penis.
- A white coating under the foreskin that can be easily wiped off (smegma) - wiping it off however, will not get rid of thrush.
- Difficulty in pulling back the foreskin.

GETTING IT

Your chances of developing thrush are increased if you:

- Are pregnant.
- Wear lycra shorts or tight nylon clothes.
- Take certain antibiotics.
- Use a vaginal deodorant or perfumed bubble bath as this can cause an irritation.
- Have sex with someone who has a thrush infection.
- Are diabetic.

DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

Men may have a swab taken gently from under their foreskin, and women may have a swab inside the vagina. A sample of pee may be taken.

Treatment for thrush is easy. A cream is applied to the genitals and women may be given pessaries (almond shaped tablets) to insert into their vagina. Oral anti-thrush tablets are now available from some sexual health clinics, GPs or from the chemist.

You should get individual advice about having sex during treatment from your doctor, nurse or health adviser.

LONG-TERM EFFECTS

Some women can get recurrent cases of thrush. If this becomes a problem, you can discuss what to do with a doctor, nurse or health adviser.

If you think you may have thrush, contact your local sexual health (GUM) clinic and make an appointment. It's easy and completely confidential.

For more information on sexual health (including HIV), call the Sexual Health Line free (from the UK) on 0800 567 123, textphone (for people with hearing impairments) 0800 521 361 or phone your local NHS sexual health clinic.