

Vaginal Thrush

Vaginal thrush is a common yeast infection that affects most women at some point. Thrush isn't usually anything to worry about in most cases, but it may be unpleasant and uncomfortable. Thrush can usually be treated with medication available from pharmacies.

Typical symptoms of vaginal thrush include:

- Itching and soreness around the entrance of the vagina
- [Vaginal discharge](#) - this is usually odourless and may be thick and white or thin and watery
- Pain during sex, which may make you worry about having sex
- A stinging sensation when peeing
- Sometimes the skin around the vagina can be red, swollen or cracked

How do I treat?

You can usually treat mild thrush without prescription medication from your [local pharmacy](#).

The main types of treatment are:

- Pessaries - a special pill that you insert into your vagina using a special applicator
- Intravaginal creams - these are also placed into the vagina using an applicator
- Capsules - these are swallowed and may be more convenient to use than pessaries or intravaginal cream

The symptoms will usually clear up within a week or two. However, for some women, vaginal thrush can be difficult to treat and keeps coming back.

Speak to your pharmacist - for advice if you're not sure which type of medicine is best for you and your symptoms.

When should I seek advice?

You don't usually need to see your GP if you have thrush, but it's a good idea to visit them if:

- You have thrush for the first time
- You're under the age of 16 or over 60
- Symptoms are unusual, such as coloured or smelly discharge
- Sores appear on the skin around your vagina
- You have abnormal vaginal bleeding or pain in your lower tummy
- You've had two episodes of thrush within the last six months
- You've reacted badly to antifungal treatment in the past or it didn't work
- You or your partner have previously had a [sexually transmitted infection \(STI\)](#) and you think it might have returned
- Symptoms don't improve after 7-14 days of treatment

Prevention

You can help prevent thrush by:

- Using water and an emollient (moisturiser) soap substitute to clean the skin around your vagina, but avoid cleaning this area more than once a day
- Applying a greasier moisturiser to the skin around your vagina several times a day to protect it (but be aware that these moisturisers can weaken condoms)
- Avoiding potential irritants in perfumed soaps, shower gels, vaginal deodorants, wipes and douches
- Avoiding wearing tight-fitting underwear or tights - some women find that special silk underwear designed for people with eczema and thrush is helpful
- Ensuring your blood sugar level is kept under control, if you have diabetes

More information is available at the following website

- NHS website - www.nhs.uk
- Or visit your local pharmacy for advice

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