



Self-care Information

Oral (Mouth) Thrush

Tips on how you can manage oral thrush symptoms
“Supporting you to look after you”

- Oral thrush is usually harmless.
- It is common in babies and older people with dentures.
- Oral thrush is caused by a fungus called Candida.
- It can be easily treated with a mouth gel.
- Oral thrush is not contagious in adults, but babies can pass it on during breast feeding. This can cause nipple thrush.
- Regularly cleaning teeth and dentures can help to prevent oral thrush.
- Rinsing your mouth with water after using inhalers can help to prevent oral thrush.

How do I know if I have oral thrush?

- Your mouth may be red inside with white patches. If you wipe off the white patches, they leave red spots that can bleed.
- Babies with oral thrush usually have a white coating on their tongue. It may look like cottage cheese and it cannot be rubbed off easily.
- You may have cracks at the corners of your mouth.
- You might notice that things taste different.
- There could be an unpleasant taste in your mouth.
- You may have pain inside your mouth (for example, a sore tongue or sore gums).
- It might be difficult to eat and drink. Babies with oral thrush may not want to feed.

You might get oral thrush if you are:

- Taking antibiotics for a long time.
- Using asthma inhalers.
- Having treatment that weakens your immune system e.g. chemotherapy for cancer treatment.

Did you know?

If you leave oral thrush untreated the infection can spread to other parts of the body.

Treatment for oral thrush

A GP can prescribe antifungal mouth gel to treat oral thrush. See your GP if you think you or your child might have oral thrush.

You could try...

- ✓ Taking good care of your teeth: brush twice a day, clean your dentures, and go for regular check-ups even if you have dentures.
- ✓ Brushing your gums and tongue with a soft toothbrush if you do not have any teeth.
- ✓ Rinsing your mouth after eating or taking medicine, including inhalers.
- ✓ Going to regular check-ups with your GP if you have a long-term condition like diabetes.
- ✓ Sterilising dummies regularly.
- ✓ Sterilising bottles after each use.



See [NHS Start for Life website](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/oral-thrush-mouth-thrush/) for advice on how to sterilise baby equipment.

Try not to:

- ✗ Wear dentures at night.
- ✗ Keep wearing dentures if they do not fit properly - see your dentist.
- ✗ Smoke or to be around smoke.



See your GP or call 111 if:

- Your baby is under 4 months and has signs of oral thrush.
- You do not see any improvement after 1 week of treatment with a mouth gel.
- You have difficulty or pain when swallowing.
- You have a weakened immune system and you have oral thrush. Examples of people with a weakened immune system include those who are having chemotherapy or take certain medicines which can affect the immune system.

Here are some links to further information:

See the NHS website for advice on oral thrush:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/oral-thrush-mouth-thrush/>

See the NHS website for advice on nipple thrush:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/breastfeeding-and-bottle-feeding/breastfeeding-problems/thrush/>



For more advice visit your local pharmacy

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For more information about My Life Choices, see their [webpage on the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICB website](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/breastfeeding-and-bottle-feeding/breastfeeding-problems/thrush/). V1.0