Genital Thrush

What is Genital Thrush?

Genital thrush, also known as a yeast infection or candidiasis, is a common condition caused by an overgrowth of a yeast-like fungus called Candida. It can affect both men and women but is more common in women.

Symptoms

Symptoms may vary between individuals, but some common signs include:

Women:

- Itching and irritation around the vagina
- Redness and swelling of the vagina and vulva
- White, odourless discharge that may resemble cottage cheese
- Discomfort or pain during sexual intercourse
- Burning sensation during urination

Men:

- Itching and irritation around the penis
- Redness and swelling at the head of the penis
- White discharge, similar to that in women
- Difficulty pulling back the foreskin
- Unpleasant odour

Causes

Thrush occurs when there is an overgrowth of Candida, which can be triggered by:

- Antibiotics: These can disrupt the balance of bacteria in your body, allowing Candida to multiply.
- Impaired immune system: Those with weakened immune systems are more susceptible.
- Diabetes: High sugar levels can encourage Candida growth.
- Hormonal changes: Hormonal fluctuations during the menstrual cycle can affect the balance of bacteria.
- Sexual intercourse: Although not classified as a sexually transmitted infection, thrush can occasionally be passed on through sexual intercourse.

Prevention

- Wear cotton underwear and avoid tight-fitting clothing that can create a moist environment.
- Avoid using perfumed products around your genital area.
- After going to the toilet, wipe from front to back to avoid spreading bacteria.
- Control your blood sugar levels if you have diabetes.

- Take probiotics to support a healthy balance of bacteria in your body.

Treatment

Thrush is usually easy to treat and can involve:

- Antifungal creams, ointments, or suppositories that you insert into your vagina.
    - One option is the Canesten 3 Day Cream 2% 20g, which comes with vaginal applicators
    - There is no evidence any of the 1 day, 3 day, or 10 day cream is any better than the other
- Antifungal tablets that you swallow
    - Often fluconazole is prescribed, 150mg as a single dose
    - It is more cost effective to get the 50mg fluconazole tablets instead

Over-the-counter treatments are often effective, but if your symptoms persist, consult your doctor as you may need a different medication or an extended course of treatment.

When to see a doctor

If you have symptoms of thrush for the first time, it's important to see a doctor to confirm the diagnosis. You should also seek medical advice if:

- You're frequently getting thrush (four or more times a year).
- You're pregnant or trying to become pregnant.
- You have a weakened immune system.
- Over-the-counter treatments aren't working.
- You have other symptoms like blistering or sores.

Remember

Genital thrush is a common condition that can be easily treated and isn't usually serious. However, if you're unsure or worried about your symptoms, always consult a healthcare professional.

This information is intended for general informational purposes and should not be used as a substitute for professional medical advice. If you have any health concerns, please see your healthcare provider.

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