



## Fungal Diseases

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# Vaginal Candidiasis

## About

**Candidiasis** is an infection caused by a yeast (a type of fungus) called *Candida*. *Candida* normally lives on skin and inside the body such as in the mouth, throat, gut, and vagina, without causing any problems. *Candida* can cause an infection if conditions change inside the vagina to encourage its growth. Things like hormones, medicines, or changes in the immune system can make infection more likely. The common term for candidiasis in the vagina is a vaginal yeast infection. Other names for this infection are vaginal candidiasis, vulvovaginal candidiasis, or candidal vaginitis.

## Symptoms

The symptoms of vaginal candidiasis include:<sup>1,2</sup>

- Vaginal itching or soreness
- Pain during sexual intercourse
- Pain or discomfort when urinating
- Abnormal vaginal discharge

Vaginal candidiasis is often mild. However, some women can develop severe infections involving redness, swelling, and cracks in the wall of the vagina.

Contact your healthcare provider if you have any of these symptoms. These symptoms are similar to those of other types of vaginal infections. A healthcare provider can tell you if you have vaginal candidiasis and how to treat it.

## Risk & Prevention

### Who gets vaginal candidiasis?

Vaginal candidiasis is common. Women who are more likely to get vaginal candidiasis include those who:

- Are pregnant
- Use hormonal contraceptives (for example, birth control pills)
- Have diabetes
- Have a weakened immune system (for example, due to HIV infection or medicines such as steroids and chemotherapy)
- Are taking or have recently taken antibiotics

### How can I prevent vaginal candidiasis?

Wearing cotton underwear might help reduce the chances of getting a yeast infection.<sup>2</sup> Because taking antibiotics can lead to vaginal candidiasis, take these medicines only when prescribed and exactly as your healthcare provider tells you. Learn more about [when antibiotics work](#) and when you do not need them.

## Sources

Scientists estimate that about 20% of women normally have *Candida* in the vagina without having any symptoms.<sup>2</sup> *Candida* can cause an infection if the conditions change inside the vagina to encourage its growth. Infection can happen because of hormones, medicines, or changes in the immune system.

## Diagnosis & Testing

Healthcare providers usually diagnose vaginal candidiasis by taking a small sample of vaginal discharge. They examine the sample under a microscope in the medical office or send it to a laboratory for a fungal culture. However, a positive fungal culture does not always mean that *Candida* is causing symptoms. Some women can have *Candida* in the vagina without having any symptoms.

## Treatment

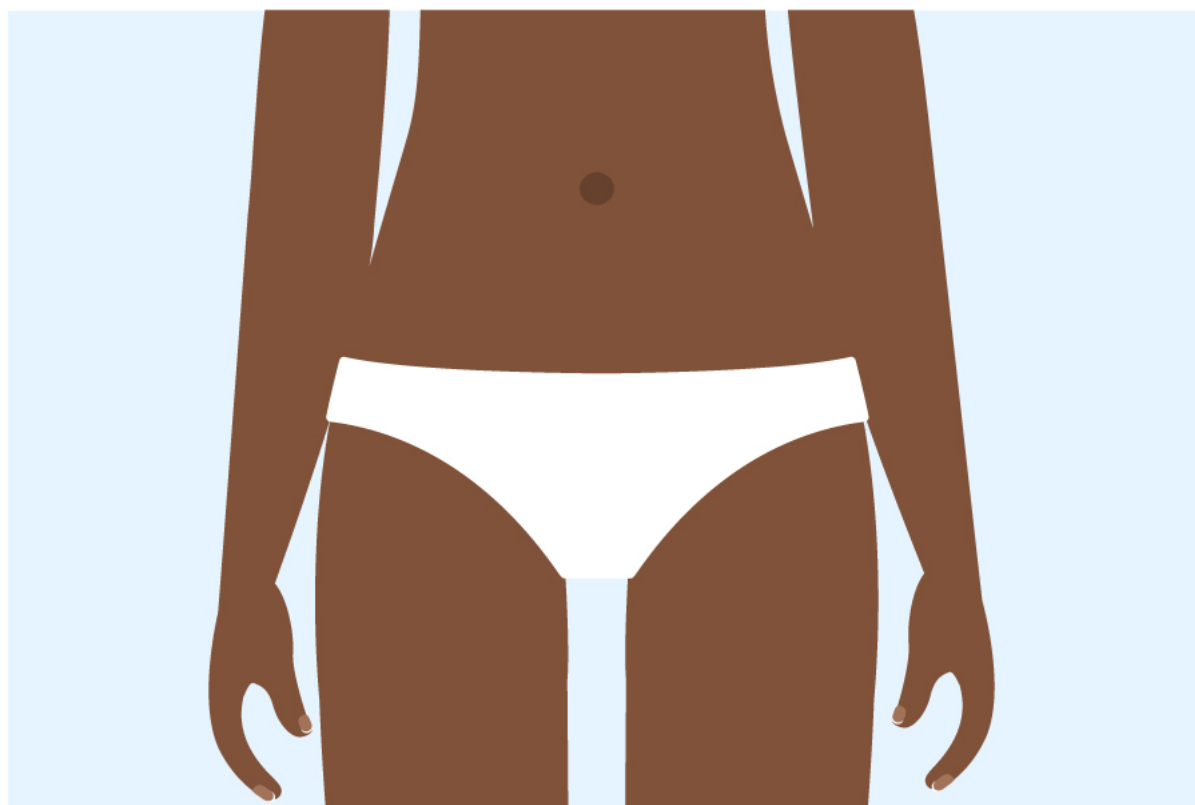
If you have vaginal candidiasis, likely you will use antifungal medicine to treat it.<sup>3</sup> Often, the treatment is an antifungal medicine applied inside the vagina or a single dose of fluconazole taken by mouth. You may need other treatments if your infection is:


- Is more severe
- Doesn't get better
- Keeps coming back after getting better

These treatments include:

- More doses of fluconazole taken by mouth
- Other medicines applied inside the vagina, such as boric acid, nystatin, or flucytosine

If you are a healthcare provider, please refer to:



- [The Infectious Diseases Society of America’s Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Management of Candidiasis](#) 
- [CDC – 2021 Sexually Transmitted Infections Treatment Guidelines: Vulvovaginal Candidiasis](#)





Statistics

Vaginal candidiasis is common. In the United States, it is the second most common type of vaginal infection after bacterial vaginal infections.<sup>2</sup> An estimated 1.4 million outpatient visits for vaginal candidiasis occur annually.<sup>4</sup> The number of vaginal candidiasis cases is unknown.

Related Links

- [CDC – 2021 Sexually Transmitted Infections Treatment Guidelines: Vulvovaginal Candidiasis](#)

References

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3. Pappas PG, Kauffman CA, Andes DR, Clark CJ, Marr KA, Ostrosky-Zeichner L, et al. [Clinical practice guideline for the management of candidiasis: 2016 update by the Infectious Diseases Society of America](#)  . Clin Infect Dis 2016;62:e1-50.
4. Benedict K, Jackson BR, Chiller T, Beer KD. [Estimation of direct healthcare costs of fungal diseases in the United States](#)  . Clin Infect Dis. 2018 Sep 10.

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