



# UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND UNIVERSITY HEALTH CENTER

Accredited by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care, Inc.  
www.health.umd.edu

## Yeast Vaginitis

Some vaginal discharge is perfectly normal and part of your body's cleaning and lubricating system. The amount of normal discharge varies from woman to woman and also during the course of the menstrual cycle, increasing at the time of ovulation and again just before menstruation. Many types of bacteria and yeast are present in the normal healthy vagina. An imbalance of these bacteria and yeast can cause symptoms of vaginal infection.

Yeast vaginitis is a very common type of vaginal infection caused by a yeast organism. It is also called monilia or candida. It is mostly a female problem, although occasionally the male gets some itching and a rash of the genital area.

### Causes

Any of the following factors can contribute to yeast infections:

- use of antibiotics
- stress
- birth control pills
- nylon underwear, tight jeans, pantyhose which do not "breathe", bathing suits. Moisture is trapped in the vaginal area allowing yeast to grow.
- deodorant tampons, feminine deodorant sprays and douches.

### Symptoms

The most common symptom is itching, usually felt on the outside around the vaginal opening. There is usually a white cottage-cheese-like discharge from the vagina.

Other symptoms may include burning of the vulva and vagina, swelling and redness, even a rash, around the vulva (external female genitals). This irritation may also cause burning with urination and painful intercourse.

### Treatment

A variety of vaginal treatments may be prescribed or obtained over the counter, in the form of creams, suppositories, vaginal tablets, or oral medication. Use all of the medication as prescribed and be sure to insert it as deep into the vagina as possible.

Abstaining from intercourse is advised, and then use of condoms for several days after finishing the medication. Many vaginal treatments contain oils which may weaken the latex in condoms or diaphragms. Avoid the use of tampons while on the medication. Use minipads or other sanitary pads, if necessary.

### Prevention

Chances of having a yeast infection can be reduced if one:

- wears cotton underwear; do not wear underwear at night while sleeping.
- avoids use of deodorant tampons, deodorant vaginal sprays.
- avoid douching.
- wipes from front to back after a bowel movement avoiding contamination from the bowel.

Revised 8.05

**Published for the University of Maryland community.**

This paper is made from 30% post consumer waste. Don't let the cycle stop here, please recycle this after you recover.