



Around the Circle Midwifery, LLC

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Yeast Infections

Yeast infections are very common and do not pose a threat to your pregnancy. However, they can be very uncomfortable. Fortunately, there are steps that you can take to minimize that chance that your infection will recur. There are also many natural remedies to help you restore balance to your vaginal environment. Restoring balance, rather than treating with anti-fungal medications, will help you avoid another yeast infection.

How can yeast infections be treated?

- Reduce the amount of sugar, juice, white flour and other processed grains that you are eating.
- Keep your vulva as dry as possible. Dry the vaginal area thoroughly after you shower or bathe. You can use a blow dryer set to “low” to help. Go without underwear when possible, or wear loose cotton underwear.
- Yogurt helps repopulate your body with friendly bacteria that will help control yeast growth. Plain yogurt with live cultures (unflavored, with no added sugar) can be eaten regularly. It can also be applied topically to the vulva to relieve itching.
- Insert lactobacillus/acidophilus capsules as vaginal suppositories for 14 nights. Make sure to push the capsules all the way up to the cervix, which feels sort of like the tip of your nose. If you’re using liquid acidophilus, you can use a syringe to insert it into your vagina. With liquid acidophilus, make sure it hasn’t expired and that you keep it in the fridge..
- Use cloves of garlic as vaginal suppositories. One technique is to insert a fresh clove three times a day for three days, making sure to remove the old one before inserting a new one. For the following three days insert lactobacillus/acidophilus suppositories .
- Place drops of lavender or tea tree essential oil on your underpants. The aroma of these essential oils is antifungal and helps kill off yeast overgrowth.
- Try adding 2 cups of apple cider vinegar to your bath for 7-10 days, or make a dilute vinegar rinse in a squirt bottle. Apple cider vinegar can be used at concentrations of up to 4 tablespoons per quart of water. Eat yogurt or insert lactobacillus suppositories each day of treatment.
- Take homeopathic Candida albicans or combined “anti-yeast” remedies (available at natural foods stores).
- As a last resort (and after you have completed your first trimester of pregnancy), use over-the-counter anti-fungal creams like Monistat, Femstat, Gyne-Lotrimin. Use the 7 day treatment, not the 1 or 3 day treatments. Insert the cream in the outer third of the vagina, and cover the labia with it as well. Eat yogurt or liquid acidophilus while using these treatments.

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What do I need to do after I start treating my yeast infection?

- If your symptoms worsen from any of the above treatments, you should discontinue them immediately and call your midwife. You may not have a Candida infection.
- If your symptoms do not improve within 7 days, you should contact your midwife. The yeast infection may have been misdiagnosed or may need a different treatment.

How can I avoid getting another yeast infection?

Sometimes, changing your personal habits can help you avoid getting yeast infections.

Nutrition:

- The amount of sugar, juice and carbohydrates consumed should be limited. Sugars and carbs encourage the growth of yeast.
- Eat foods such as unsweetened yogurt that contain live cultures of lactobacillus and acidophilus.

Clothing:

- Wear cotton underwear, not nylon.
- Don't wear pantyhose or tights every day. Don't wear slacks and shorts that are tight in the crotch and thighs or other tight fitting clothing.
- Launder underwear in hot water. Do not use a fabric softener in the dryer. Add apple cider or white vinegar to the rinse cycle.
- Change swimwear and workout clothes right away after swimming or exercising.

Hygiene:

- Don't douche or use feminine hygiene sprays or bubble bath.
- Avoid getting soap, perfume or talcum powder on or in your vagina.
- Don't use colored or perfumed toilet paper.
- Dry the vaginal area thoroughly after you shower or bathe. You can use a blow dryer set to "low" to help.
- Take showers instead of baths.
- When you're not pregnant, use unscented tampons or sanitary pads, and change tampons and sanitary pads frequently.

Sexuality:

- During sex, use a sterile, water-soluble lubricant, like KY-Jelly. Switch brands if you find that one irritates you. Sex that irritates the vagina can cause a yeast infection. Oil-based lubricants can also cause vaginal infections.
- Before lovemaking, ask your partner to bathe.
- Avoid sexual intercourse that is painful or abrasive to your vagina. This may mean that you need to have sex less frequently, or that you should explore different positions.
- While you are being treated, you should avoid sexual intercourse. If you decide to have intercourse, using a condom will minimize the chance of passing the infection between each other. If you are getting repeated infections, ask you partner to get treated also, as your partner may have an asymptomatic yeast infection.

Other hints:

- Antibiotics can aggravate or cause yeast infections. If you need to be on antibiotics, consider doing some of the "preventing yeast infection" measures to reduce your chances of getting a yeast infection or making an existing infection worse.
- Get plenty of rest. Give your body time to heal.