

The Importance of Yeast Infections in Humans and its Role in *Candida*

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DESCRIPTION

Yeast infections are a common and uncomfortable health issue that can affect people of all genders and ages. These infections, primarily caused by the overgrowth of a type of fungus called *Candida*, can occur in various parts of the body. While they are usually not serious, they can cause significant discomfort and disrupt daily life. In this article, we will explore yeast infections in detail, including their causes, symptoms, and treatment options.

Causes of yeast infections

Yeast infections are typically caused by an overgrowth of the *Candida* fungus. *Candida* is naturally present in small amounts in various parts of the body, including the mouth, digestive tract, and genital area. However, certain factors can lead to an overgrowth of this fungus, activating a yeast infection. Some common causes include

Antibiotics: Antibiotics can disrupt the natural balance of microorganisms in the body, including the beneficial bacteria that help keep *Candida* in check. This disruption can cause *Candida* to multiply and cause an infection.

Weakened immune system: A weakened immune system, often due to conditions like (HIV) Human Immuno Deficiency Virus (AIDS) Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome or chemotherapy, can make the body less capable of fighting off fungal infections, including yeast infections.

Pregnancy: Hormonal changes during pregnancy can alter the vaginal environment, making it more conducive to yeast overgrowth.

Diabetes: People with uncontrolled diabetes are more susceptible to yeast infections because high blood sugar levels can promote yeast growth.

Oral contraceptives: Some birth control methods, such as birth control pills, can affect hormonal balance, increasing the risk of yeast infections.

Diet and lifestyle: A diet high in sugar and refined carbohydrates

can provide nourishment for *Candida*. Similarly, tight or non-breathable clothing can create a warm, moist environment that encourages yeast growth.

Symptoms of yeast infections

The symptoms of yeast infections can vary depending on the affected area. Here are some common signs and symptoms associated with different types of yeast infections.

Vaginal yeast infections

- Itching and burning in the genital area.
- Redness and swelling of the vulva.
- Thick, white, cottage vaginal discharge.
- Pain or discomfort during sexual intercourse or urination.

Oral thrush

- White, creamy lesions on the tongue, inner cheeks, and throat.
- Soreness or difficulty swallowing.
- Loss of taste sensation.

Skin yeast infections

- Itchy, red rash with well-defined edges.
- Small, raised blisters or pustules.
- Cracking or peeling skin.

Nail yeast infections

- Thickened, discolored nails.
- Brittle or crumbly nails.
- Pain or discomfort around the affected nail.

Treatment options

Fortunately, yeast infections are usually easily treatable. The treatment approach depends on the location and severity of the infection. Here are some common treatment options.

Antifungal medications

Over The Counter (OTC) topical creams, ointments, and suppositories are available for vaginal yeast infections.

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Prescription antifungal medications may be necessary for more severe or recurrent infections.

Oral antifungal medications

For oral thrush or severe cases of yeast infections, healthcare providers may prescribe oral antifungal medications such as fluconazole.

Home remedies

Some individuals may find relief from mild yeast infections by using home remedies like yogurt, coconut oil, or garlic. However, it's essential to consult a healthcare provider before attempting home remedies.

Lifestyle changes

Avoiding tight-fitting clothing and maintaining good hygiene can help prevent yeast infections. Managing underlying

conditions like diabetes and maintaining a healthy diet can reduce the risk of recurrent infections.

CONCLUSION

Yeast infections are a common health issue that can cause discomfort and inconvenience. While they can affect various parts of the body, they are typically caused by an overgrowth of the *Candida* fungus. Understanding the causes, symptoms, and treatment options for yeast infections is crucial for managing and preventing these infections. If one suspect you have a yeast infection, consult a healthcare provider for proper diagnosis and treatment to alleviate symptoms and prevent recurrence.