

## Oral Yeast Infections (Candidiasis)

### What Is Candidiasis?

Candidiasis is a fungal infection on skin or mucous membranes caused by overgrowth of the yeast *Candida albicans*. When this infection occurs in the mouth or throat, it is called a “thrush.” Thrush often causes painless, white patches in the mouth, but it may yield other symptoms.

### What Causes Candidiasis?

Although *Candida* normally resides in the mouth, if the balance between bacterial and yeasts in the oral environment becomes disturbed, *Candida* can multiply and cause an infection. This infection more typically occurs in normal newborn babies, the elderly, denture wearers, and in individuals who have weakened immune systems. Other factors that may contribute to the onset of candidiasis include:

- Having dry mouth syndrome
- Taking antibiotics
- Using inhaled corticosteroids
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### What Are the Symptoms?

The following are the more common signs and symptoms of candidiasis. However, other conditions may cause similar signs and symptoms, so see your dental professional for evaluation. Signs and symptoms may include but are not limited to:

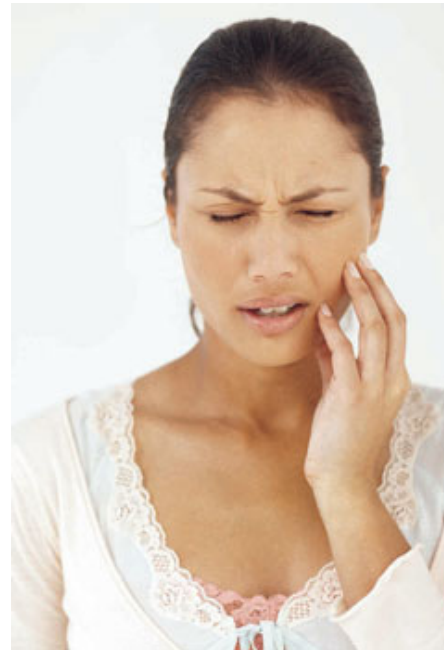
- White painless patches in the mouth
- Redness or soreness inside the mouth
- Cracking at the corners of the mouth
- Pain or difficulty in swallowing
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### How Is Candidiasis Diagnosed?

After examining your mouth and symptoms, your dental professional may take a scraping of the white patches and examine it under a microscope. The scraping may also be cultured, but because *Candida* is usually found in the mouth, positive identification is not conclusive. Your dental professional will also work to identify what factors may be causing the infection.

### How Is it Treated?

Controlling thrush depends on managing the underlying cause of the infection. Keeping your mouth clean is important. Dentures, especially those on the roof of the mouth, are



well-suited to harboring yeast. Therefore, they should thoroughly cleaned to remove *Candida* and taken out and disinfected at bedtime.

Other antifungal medications such as topical rinses, lozenges or pills taken by mouth may be used. Oral fluconazole is a commonly prescribed treatment. If these treatments do not work, a medical consultation may be in order.

“Mouth Sores.” Mouth Healthy, American Dental Association.

<http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/m/mouth-sores> Accessed 2013.

“Candidiasis.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Foodborne, Bacterial and Mycotic Diseases, January 5, 2012.

<http://www.cdc.gov/fungal/candidiasis/> Accessed 2013.

“Patient Information Sheet: Oral Yeast Infections (Thrush or Candidiasis).” The American Academy of Oral Medicine, June 1, 2007.

<http://www.laudenbach.com/resources/PatienthandoutCandidiasisSReddingrevMAH6107.pdf> Accessed 2013.