

Vaginal Yeast Infections

Yeast live and grow in our mouths, intestines, and vaginas. Yeast infections occur when there's too much of a certain type of yeast called candida ...

If you have had a vaginal yeast infection in the past and your symptoms are the same, you may be able to treat yourself without first seeing a health care provider. Most vaginal yeast infections can be treated with non-prescription medications.

Symptoms

- Vaginal itching, burning, swelling
- Vaginal discharge (thick white vaginal discharge that may look like cottage cheese and does not have a bad smell)
- May have pain during vaginal sex

Self-care measures

- Purchase a non-prescription medication containing butoconazole, clotrimazole, miconazole, or tioconazole. These are available in the pharmacy at Cornell Health, other pharmacies, grocery stores, and superstores.
- Vaginal yeast medications may be a creams or a vaginal suppository. The package label will tell you how and for how long to use the medication. If you have sensitive skin, avoid shorter (1- or 3- day) treatments, as they can be irritating to the vagina.
- Caution: Vaginal yeast creams can cause latex condoms to break.

When to seek care from a medical provider

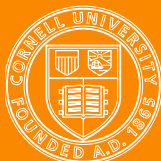
- If this is the first time you have had symptoms of a yeast infection (confirm before you treat)
- If you are concerned you may have a sexually transmitted infection (STI)

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- If the discharge has a strong or foul odor
- If you have a painful sore in your genital area
- If you have symptoms of a bladder infection (e.g., pain when you urinate, frequent urination, and/or blood in your urine)
- If you have no improvement in your symptoms three days after treatment with your non-prescription medication

To make an appointment at Cornell Health, call 607-255-5155 during business hours, or go to myCornellHealth (from health.cornell.edu) and find a time that works for you.

Preventing future yeast infections

- If menstruating, change tampons, pads and panty liners often. Do not use scented tampons or other menstrual products.
- Do not douche or use vaginal sprays.
- Only wear panty liners when you are menstruating.
- Wear underwear made of breathable fabric with a cotton crotch.
- Keep things loose. Avoid tight jeans, yoga pants, etc. Remove underwear for sleep; wear loose-fitting pajama bottoms or shorts.
- Thoroughly clean any sex toys used for vaginal sex after each use, according to manufacturer guidelines.
- Avoid hot tubs and extra-hot baths. Hot, wet conditions promote yeast growth.
- Stay dry. Change out of wet swimwear or work-out gear promptly and put on dry clothing.
- Avoid taking antibiotics unless absolutely necessary. They can kill the bacteria that help keep in check the abundance of yeast.

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