



YEAST INFECTIONS

Thrush (or yeast) is caused by an overgrowth of “Candida”, a strain of yeast that normally inhabits moist parts of the body (mouth, gastrointestinal tract, vagina). Under certain conditions it can overgrow and become a problem.

Pregnancy (due to changes in hormones), antibiotic use (which changes the balance of normal bacteria in the intestines), fatigue, poor nutrition and illnesses (which stress the immune system) may all encourage an overgrowth of yeast in the body.

During breastfeeding, yeast may become a problem due to moist nipples. It also can be passed back and forth from mother to baby.

Yeast is more common if there is nipple break down.

Yeast is difficult to culture, therefore, a diagnosis is usually made due to certain symptoms. The overgrowth may clear up quickly, or it may take a concerted effort to decrease the amount of yeast to a normal level.

Symptoms of a Yeast Infection

- A burning or shooting pain in the nipple or breast during or after nursing or pumping. The pain may radiate to the underarm or back; it may be worse at night.
- A painful latch, after weeks of pain-free nursing.
- Nipple itching or flaking, redness or shininess, a red or pink rash with small blisters or white spots on the nipple or areola.
- A recent or current vaginal infection (it is easy to ‘spread’ a yeast infection to another part of the body or from person to person, including mother to baby).
- White patches in baby’s mouth – they look like milk, but may bleed if scraped.
- A bright red diaper rash, which does not go away.
- A fussy baby who seems to find nursing uncomfortable. He/she may refuse the breast, come “off and on” frequently, or make a clicking sound when nursing.