

sex talk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

wildfact

Yeast infections are incredibly common and affect up to 75% of women at some point in their lifetime.

What exactly is a yeast infection?

Yeast grows normally throughout the body and is part of the healthy flora for most people; it only becomes a problem when it gets out of balance. The most common organism which causes vaginal yeast infections is called *Candida albicans*, and when it multiplies rapidly a yeast infection can occur. The main symptom of a yeast infection is itching, but other symptoms include an odorless, thick white discharge (resembling cottage cheese), inflammation, and burning.

So how does the yeast get out of balance in the first place? Here are some common factors:

- Having a weakened immune system - due to an inability to keep yeast numbers at bay
- Use of antibiotics - which can wipe out “friendly” bacteria that help control yeasts
- Diabetes - since higher amounts of available glucose (sugar) in the body can cause yeast to multiply

- Increased estrogen levels: due to birth control pills or pregnancy

An overgrowth of yeast also occurs in a warm and moist environment, so to reduce your chances of a yeast infection keep extra moisture away from your genital area. Change out of wet bottoms (swim or workout gear) as soon as possible, avoid tight fitting clothing, wear cotton underwear, and after using the bathroom thoroughly wipe from front to back.

Treatment of a yeast infection involves anti-yeast creams or suppositories which are placed inside the vagina, or by taking a prescribed oral antifungal medication.

If you think you may have a yeast infection and/or something just doesn't seem right down there, make an appointment with a health care provider. To schedule a confidential appointment with our Women's Health Clinic, call (520) 621-9202.



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Have a question? Email it to sextalk@email.arizona.edu



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