

Thrush

(Oral Candida Yeast Infection)

McKenzie Pediatrics - Revised April 2007

What is Thrush?

A mouth infection by a common human yeast known as Candida.

What are the signs and symptoms?

- White, irregularly shaped patches that coat the tongue, and possibly the inside of the mouth
- May cause discomfort or pain while nursing
- Note: A uniformly white tongue is not likely thrush, but rather from a milk diet.

How are they spread?

- The yeast commonly lives on the mother's nipples, loving the warm, moist, high sugar environment where the skin has microscopic frictional breakdown due to the sucking of the baby. The mother usually does not experience any symptoms or signs of having the yeast.
- It is not contagious to normal healthy skin. However, babies who sleep with a pacifier or a bottle in their mouths are prone to thrush, since excessive time spent sucking causes microscopic abrasions in the lining of the mouth, where yeast from the environment can hide and grow.

When do you treat?

- No Treatment necessary: If mild thrush on tongue and the mother has no symptoms of a breast yeast infection (burning, stinging, itching, and/or pain throughout and between nursing).
- Treat: If large amounts on tongue, or has spread to the gums or inside of the cheeks.
 - * Gentian Violet: A purple dye purchased over-the-counter, and applied by cotton swab to all the visible thrush patches once a day, up to 3 days.
 - * Nystatin: Requires a prescription. Applied as 1 ml via swab 4 times a day for at least 7 days, or for at least until all the thrush has been gone at least 3 days. Do not feed the baby until more than 30 minutes after applied.
 - * Soak all bottle nipples and pacifiers for at least 5 minutes in boiling water.

Exclude from group setting?

No

Call the office if the gentian violet fails, or if thrush is still present after 10 days of Nystatin.