

Candida

Further information about STIs is available on the Soa Aids Nederland (STI AIDS Netherlands) website www.soa aids.nl or on www.candida.nl (Dutch).

Soa Aids Nederland is a centre of expertise for HIV infection and other STIs. The www.soa aids.nl website gives detailed information on HIV, other STIs and related topics. Young people can visit the Dutch information site www.sense.info.

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For answers to your questions on STIs, call the AIDS STI Infoline

0900-204 204 0 (10 cents per minute)

Mon – Wed 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Thurs and Fri 2 – 8 p.m.

or send an e-mail to: infolijn@soa aids.nl

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Candidiasis (also known as vaginal thrush) is not a sexually transmitted infection (STI). It is an infection caused by excessive growth of the yeast named: *Candida albicans*. This harmless yeast lives in our bodies, usually without us noticing it.

Under certain conditions, symptoms could develop because of an increase in the amount of yeast. It is often women who are affected. Excessive yeast growth may, for example, be caused by drugs which have an effect on your body's resistance (such as prednisone) or by diabetes. A vaginal *Candida* infection is also often seen in women taking the pill, during pregnancy or after a course of antibiotics for a bacterial infection.

Thrush is not serious and is easy to treat. Excessive growth of the yeast might develop on the mucous membrane of the genitals, but could also occur in the mouth or rectum. The symptoms can be a real nuisance and may recur.

Symptoms in men and women

Often vaginal thrush doesn't cause any signs or symptoms at all. If there are symptoms, then women will usually experience (severe) itching, redness, irritated skin or a burning sensation. Passing urine and having sex may be painful. There might be more discharge, which is white and thick but doesn't smell. Most men will not have any real symptoms. Sometimes (usually soon after unprotected sex with a woman who has thrush) there may be some redness or a rash on the tip of the penis. If so, there might also be itching or a burning sensation. The symptoms usually go away by themselves.

Treatment

The infection is easy to treat. Usually an antifungal cream is prescribed for use in and around the vagina or on the penis. Women may also be prescribed vaginal tablets. The yeast is only treated if there are symptoms. The same goes for partners.

It is best not to have sex during the course of treatment. This makes it easier for the mucous membrane of the vagina (or the penis) to heal.