



A guide to  
**Thrush**

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**Sexual Health &  
Crisis Pregnancy Programme**



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## What is thrush?

Thrush is a very common cause of itch and discomfort in the genital area. It is caused by an overgrowth of yeast (candida). It is not considered a sexually-transmitted infection.

## How common is thrush?

Thrush is a very common condition and anyone can get thrush.

Thrush is more common during pregnancy and in people who have diabetes or HIV.

## How do I get thrush?

Although thrush can be passed on during sex, it is not a sexually-transmitted infection, and it can affect people even when they do not have sex.

You might get thrush when taking certain antibiotics or chemotherapy treatments that affect the immune system.

Or, if you wear tight clothing, this can also encourage thrush to develop.

Thrush can be made worse by products that may cause irritation of the vagina, such as vaginal deodorants or bubble bath.

## What symptoms would I have with thrush?

### Men

- Irritation under the foreskin or tip of the penis (balanitis)
- Spotty, red rash at the tip of the penis
- White discharge under the foreskin.

### Women

- Vaginal itch
- Vaginal soreness
- Vaginal redness
- White, thick discharge
- Discomfort during sex or urinating.

## How can I be tested for thrush?

The diagnosis is usually made based on your description of your symptoms and an examination by a doctor or nurse.

## How is thrush treated?

Thrush can be treated with creams, pessaries (vaginal tablets) or oral tablets.

Some treatments are available from a pharmacy without a prescription. If your symptoms do not improve, you should see your doctor or nurse.

## What about my partner?

Your partner does not need to be tested or treated unless they have symptoms that they are concerned about.

## How can I prevent myself from getting thrush again?

- Wear cotton underwear
- Avoid tight clothing
- Avoid too much washing of your genitals
- Do not use soaps, perfumed products or vaginal deodorant products.