



## Self-care Information

# Thrush in Men and Women

Tips on how you can manage thrush symptoms  
**“Supporting you to look after you”**

- Thrush is a common yeast infection that affects men and women.
- It is usually harmless, but it can be uncomfortable and keep coming back.
- It is not classed as a sexually transmitted infection (STI).
- Thrush is treated with antifungal medicine. This can be a tablet you take, a tablet you insert into your vagina (pessary) or a cream.
- Thrush should clear up within 7 to 14 days of starting treatment.
- Ask your local pharmacist for advice.

### Your community pharmacy can help with thrush.

- You can buy an antifungal medicine from a pharmacy if you've had thrush diagnosed before and you know the symptoms. They will advise on the best treatment for you.
- Ask if the pharmacy has a private area to talk if you are embarrassed.
- You should not use antifungal medicine more than twice in 6 months without speaking to a pharmacist or doctor.



**Let your pharmacist know if you take any other medicines, or if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, as this may affect which treatments you can use safely.**

### How do I know if I have thrush?

#### Thrush symptoms in women:

- White vaginal discharge (often like cottage cheese) which does not usually smell.
- Itching and irritation around the vulva and vagina.
- Soreness and stinging when you have sex or when you pee.

#### Thrush symptoms in men:

- Irritation, burning and redness around the head of the penis and under the foreskin.
- A white discharge from the penis (like cottage cheese).
- An unpleasant smell.
- It might be difficult to pull back the foreskin.

#### Thrush in other areas:

- Thrush can affect other areas of skin, such as the armpits, groin and between the fingers.
- This can cause a red, itchy or painful rash that can look scaly and produce a white or yellow discharge.

**Sometimes thrush doesn't cause any symptoms.**

There are some pictures of what thrush looks like on the vagina, penis and skin on the NHS website (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/thrush-in-men-and-women/>)

Did you know?

**Antifungal creams can damage condoms and diaphragms. This means that this type of contraception might not work if you have sex during treatment.**

**Things you can do yourself to make it more comfortable and prevent thrush from coming back.**

### You could try...

- ✓ Use water and an emollient (like E45 cream) instead of soap to wash the affected area.
- ✓ Dry properly after washing.
- ✓ Wear cotton underwear.
- ✓ Avoid sex until thrush has cleared up if sex is uncomfortable.



### Try not to:

- ✗ Use soaps or shower gels.
- ✗ Use douches or deodorants on your vagina or penis.
- ✗ Wear tight underwear or tights.



### See your GP if:

- You have symptoms of thrush for the first time.
- You are a man with thrush and your sexual partner does not have it.
- You have thrush and are under 16 or over 60.
- Thrush keeps coming back (more than 4 times in 12 months).
- Treatment for thrush has not worked.
- You have thrush and are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- You have thrush and a weakened immune system – for example, because of diabetes, HIV or chemotherapy.

**You may also be able to get help from a sexual health clinic if you think you have thrush.**



### Here are some links to further information:

See the **NHS** website for advice on thrush:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/thrush-in-men-and-women/>

See the **patient** website for advice on thrush:

<https://patient.info/infections/fungal-infections/thrush-in-men>

<https://patient.info/sexual-health/vaginal-discharge-female-discharge/vaginal-thrush-yeast-infection>

### For more advice visit your local pharmacy

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For more information about My Life Choices, see their [webpage on the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICB website](#). V1.0