



University of North Carolina Wilmington  
Abrons Student Health Center

## INSTRUCTION SHEET: YEAST VAGINITIS

The Student Health Provider has diagnosed a yeast infection of your vagina. The infection is irritating, but not serious; the infection does not spread to other parts of the body.

Women normally have tiny yeast (also known as fungus) and bacteria living in the vagina. “Infection” with yeast is really an overgrowth of one type of yeast known as *Candida* or *Monilia*.

The overgrowth of yeast irritates the mucosa (skin) of the vagina: Itching, burning, discharge, and sometimes an unpleasant odor result. The discharge is typically thick and white, resembling cottage cheese. Occasionally, yeast infection causes enough irritation to make sexual intercourse uncomfortable.

Many factors can upset the normal balance of bacteria and yeast in the vagina, leading to overgrowth/infection. Common factors include: medicines such as antibiotics and birth control pills, pregnancy, diabetes, and wearing nylon underwear or pantyhose. Other factors which may play a part in causing yeast infection include using colored or perfumed toilet paper, wearing tampons, and sitting in bubble baths or hot tubs. Yeast infections generally occur more often in the summertime.

### MEASURES YOU SHOULD TAKE TO HELP TREAT YOUR YEAST INFECTION:

1. Two types of treatments are available: pill and topical. The pill is a one-time dose. Topical medicine is an anti-fungal cream or suppository, available by prescription or over-the counter. If the provider prescribes a medicine for you, use it as directed. Over-the-counter medicines should be used only by women who are certain they have a *yeast* infection: Creams and suppositories do not treat other types of female infections.
2. The creams used to treat yeast infections can weaken condoms and diaphragms: Do not rely on condoms or diaphragms to prevent pregnancy or sexually-transmitted diseases while using the medicine.
3. Do not douche. Sitting in bath water with 1/2 cup of salt or white vinegar added can help relieve irritation of the vagina.
4. Wear loose, cotton underpants instead of tight, synthetic underpants or pantyhose. Pantyhose with a cotton crotch are better than all-nylon. Avoid feminine hygiene sprays, scented toilet paper, deodorant panty liners, bubble baths, and tampons. Let your doctor know in the future if certain antibiotics tend to cause yeast infections.
5. If your symptoms are not better within three days or completely gone within seven days, return to the Student Health Center or see your personal/referral Ob-Gyn or family medical provider. Should your overall condition worsen, go to the closest emergency department, Urgent Care facility or see your personal/referral Ob-Gyn doctor *promptly*. Specifically, seek care if you develop significant low abdominal pain, fever >100 degrees, vomiting, or increasing/foul vaginal discharge.