



## MARCH NEWSLETTER



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### Yeast Infections

By Claire Pitcher, Registered Nurse

The human body has an amazing ability to keep itself healthy, often in ways we rarely even think about! The vagina is an amazing example of a body part that does tons of stuff to keep itself healthy! You may know there is natural and healthy bacteria inside the gut that helps to keep our bodies healthy. You may now know that the vagina also has a healthy, normal amount of bacteria and other growth inside of it that helps to keep everything in balance and working well. For a number of reasons, sometimes certain types of those healthy bacteria can reproduce too much or not enough and this can lead to uncomfortable physical symptoms like vaginal itching caused by yeast infections.

**What is a vaginal yeast infection?** There is usually a small amount of a certain type of fungus (called *Candida albicans*) that lives inside of the vagina. For a many different reasons, too much of this fungus can start to grow inside of the vagina – this can lead to what we call a “yeast infection”.

**What are the symptoms of a yeast infection?** The symptoms of a yeast infection can feel different for different people. Common symptoms include things like vaginal itching and redness as well as an increase in vaginal discharge (especially a thick, cottage-cheese like discharge.)

**What should I do if I think I have a yeast infection?** It’s highly recommended to go see a health care provider in person before deciding to treat it yourself with an over-the-counter treatment. The symptoms of a yeast infection can also be caused by many other things...anything from an allergy to a new laundry soap to other infections such as chlamydia. By seeing a health care provider in person before trying to treat the symptoms, you can ensure you’re using the



### Contest of the Month

- 1) Our bodies contain good bacteria **True or False**
- 2) Talking to a trusted health care provider is the best way to get health information  
**True or False**
- 3) Yeast infections are very rare **True or False**

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best treatment possible. For example, the medicine to treat a yeast infection wouldn't be effective for treating the bacteria that causes Chlamydia, so it's best to get a diagnosis before you try to treat anything yourself.

**Is a yeast infection contagious?** Yeast infections are not considered Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). This means that people can get yeast infections even if they've never been sexually active before!

**Is there anything I can do to prevent yeast infections?** Yeast infections are very common. That being said, there are things people can do to help prevent yeast infections. For example, the vagina does a great job of keeping itself healthy all on its own. Using heavily scented products (like harsh soaps and/or douches) in and around the vagina can upset the delicate balance of healthy bacteria that help to keep yeast infections at bay. Other tips for keeping a healthy vagina include: changing out of any wet clothing/bathing suits/underwear immediately, not wearing underwear to bed and only using cotton panty liners sparingly.

**I keep getting yeast infections, what's the deal with that?** Any time you have questions about your vaginal health, it's really important to see a health care provider in person. There is a lot of misinformation out there about healthy vaginas so, relying only on information from friends or the internet can mean you may not get the whole picture. Speaking with someone like a doctor or nurse can help ensure you get an accurate and personalized answer to a question like what might be causing repeat yeast infections!

Check out this website for more info:

<https://smartsexresource.com/topics/yeast-infection>



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