

Candida Albicans

An Overview

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IMPORTANT

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Introduction

Candida Albicans is a dimorphic fungus (i.e. it can take two forms). Most of the time it exists as oval, single yeast cells, which reproduce by budding.

(Picture right Candida Albicans (oval cell form))

Most yeasts do not produce mycelia (a mass of branching, threadlike hyphal filaments), but Candida has a trick up its sleeve. Normal room temperatures favour the yeast form of the organism, but under physiological conditions (body temperature, pH, and the presence of serum) it may develop into a hyphal form. Pseudohyphae, composed of chains of cells, are also common.

There are many species of the genus candida which cause the disease known as Candidiasis or 'thrush'. Candida is a commensal (denoting an association between two organisms) organism found in 40 to 80% of normal humans, and it is present in the mouth, gut, and vagina.



However, problems can start when a person experiences some alteration in:

- cellular immunity: e.g. immunosuppression or AIDS
- normal body flora: e.g. loss of normal bacterial flora due to antibiotic or steroid therapy
- normal physiology: e.g. cardiac surgery or indwelling catheters

(Picture right - Candida Albicans (hyphal form))

Further, Candidiasis can occur as the result of:

- a debilitating illness
- immunosuppressive therapy
- cytotoxic drug therapy
- disturbed intestinal flora
- pregnancy

Moreover, oral infection may be the result of:

- poor hygiene
- carious teeth
- badly fitting dentures

Although candida most frequently infects the skin and mucosal surfaces, it can cause systemic infections manifesting as pneumonia, septicaemia or endocarditis in severely immunocompromised individuals.

There does not appear to be significant difference in pathogenic potential of different candida strains, therefore establishment of infection appears to be determined by host factors and not the organism itself. However, the ability to assume various forms may be related to the pathogenicity of the organism.

(Picture right - Candida of Vaginal Epithelium)

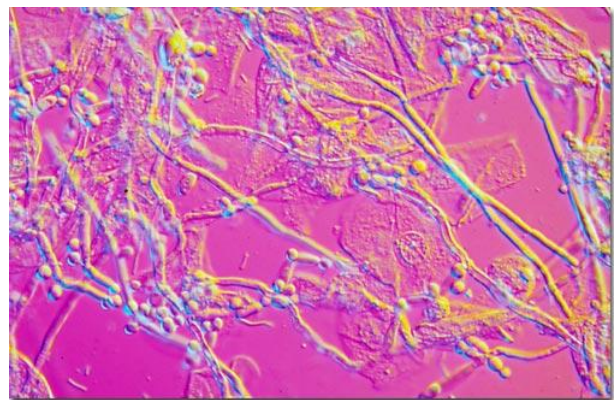
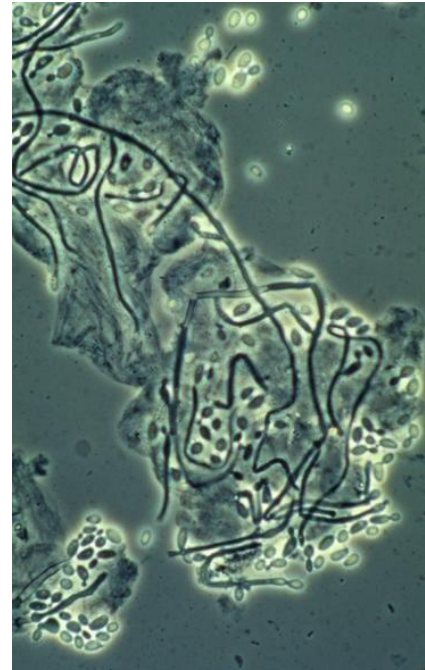
What is Candidiasis?

Candidiasis is a condition that results when the friendly bacteria in the intestinal tract have been destroyed or overcome. Yeast organisms (which are always present in the body, but are kept under control by good bacteria) get out of balance and grow unchecked. Candidiasis is also known as a 'Yeast Infection' or 'Candida Albicans'. Most people experience simple yeast infections at one time or another. Early manifestations may be a vaginal yeast infection, a rash (like nappy rash), athletes' foot, or oral thrush (yeast rash inside the mouth). However, if these 'minor' infections are not treated and recurrences prevented, the yeast may invade the bloodstream and spread throughout the entire body.

(Picture right – Candidiasis in an infant)

At this point it becomes 'Systemic Candidiasis' because it may invade and weaken every system of the body (digestive system from mouth to rectum, circulatory system including blood pressure and the heart, respiratory system, endocrine and reproductive system, nervous system including the brain, and the complete immune system).

The only purpose scientists have found for the presence of yeast in the human body is to assist in the decomposition of the body after death. Consequently, Candidiasis, in reality, is yeast decaying the body while the individual is still living in it.



What does Systemic Candidiasis lead to?

Systemic Candidiasis may lead to a wide variety of severe symptoms which mimic many other disorders, thus evading accurate diagnosis and treatment. Consequently, many doctors have begun mislabelling individuals who manifest this 'same roster of symptoms' as having Epstein Barr Virus (EBV), Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS), Chronic Mononucleosis (Mono), Yuppie Disease, Neurasthenia, or Myalgic Encephalomyelitis, etc. Consequently the real problem goes undetected and untreated.

What can destroy the good bacteria and lead to Candidiasis?

Yeast may overgrow when antibiotics, allopathic medications, drugs, birth control pills, hormone pills, steroids, and Cortisone are taken. These medications tend to kill the good bacteria in addition to the bad bacteria that caused the current illness. Consequently, the yeast begins to reign freely until the immune system restores balance.

Unfortunately, our typical modern diet seriously exacerbates the problem. Refined sugars and high starch/carbohydrate foods give the yeast exactly what it needs to flourish. This is why so many people crave sweets and breads, just as badly as an alcoholic craves alcohol - the yeast is demanding fuel to keep it ever growing.

Another factor that promotes yeast overgrowth is stress, which depresses or even shuts down the Immune System. It is noted that following a great stress (personal or work related) an individual is more than likely to become seriously ill within the next twelve months, as a result of that stress on the body.

When a history of multiple medications/drugs is combined with poor diet and high stress, the stage may be set for Systemic Candidiasis.

What symptoms may be manifested by Candida?

First Stage

(Picture right – Candidiasis of lips and gums)

In the first stage of Candida, the mucous membrane areas of the body may be infected - this includes:

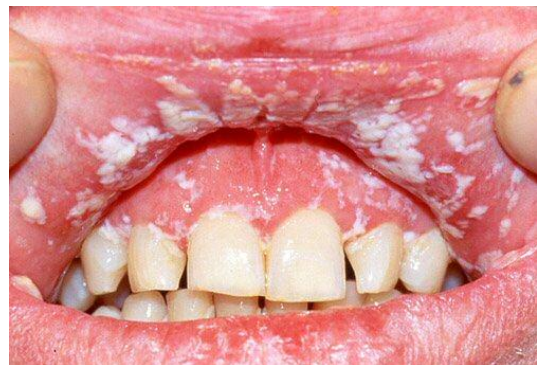
- the mouth
- the vagina
- the nose
- the respiratory system

Other manifested conditions include:

- vaginal infections
- severe pre-menstrual syndrome (PMS)
- urinary tract infections
- body rashes
- acne
- oral thrush
- allergies to foods, dust, moulds, fungus, yeast, inhalants, and chemicals

(Picture right – Candida Body Rash)

Additionally, repeated bouts of bronchitis, sinusitis, tonsillitis, and strep or staph infections may be typical. Mononucleosis and pneumonia may also be noted.



It is easy to perceive that each of these successive illnesses requires more and more antibiotics, which may contribute to further and escalating Candida overgrowth.

Second Stage

The second stage of Candida may involve more generalised reactions such as:

- pain
- headaches (including migraine)
- extreme fatigue
- psoriasis (skin disease marked by red, itchy, scaly patches)
- infections of the nails
- muscle aches
- joint pains
- arthritis

Again, the individual typically takes drug after drug in the hope of alleviating these conditions. However, in most cases, the symptoms alone are being treated, while the cause (Candida overgrowth) is being promoted at the same time.

Third Stage

The third stage of Candida may involve mental and behavioural responses, including:

- inability to concentrate
- not being able to read
- not being able to follow a television program or movie
- not being able to carry on a hobby
- serious forgetfulness
- memory loss
- mental confusion
- not being able to think of the words to say something
- switching around of words and letters when trying to speak and/or write something
- loss of previous skills (such as how-to-type or how-to-play-the-piano, play chess, etc.)

These frightening problems may often lead to:

- hopeless crying spells
- severe depression
- sleep disorders including:
 - insomnia
 - confusion dreams
 - nightmares
 - apnea (temporary cessation of breathing)
 - and not feeling rested or restored after sleep
- irrational thoughts
- unusual fears
- phobias
- panic/anxiety attacks
- muscle twitching
- irritability
- violence
- aggressive behaviour
- possible epileptic seizures
- thoughts of death or suicide

Sometimes people with these symptoms are labelled 'mentally ill', and are thought to be suffering from manic-depressive psychosis or schizophrenia. Unfortunately, these desperately sick individuals are sometimes turned over to the care of a psychiatrist or hospitalised in a mental institution. They may be given antidepressants, tranquilizers, lithium, etc. to lighten the mental symptoms. However, the real cause may be overlooked and the individual is not correctly helped.

Fourth Stage

A person in the fourth stage of Candida may experience the virtual shutdown of various organ systems of the body. For example:

- the adrenal glands may stop functioning when the endocrine system fails, or the digestive system may stop functioning and thus produce vomiting or severe constipation.
- extreme fatigue may escalate into total muscle weakness, such as the neck muscles no longer being able to hold up the head.
- body rashes may escalate into hives or boils.
- the circulatory system may be swamped with so much yeast that the capillaries are clogged, causing high blood pressure, numbness of extremities, and easy bruising.
- the individual may run a low-grade fever, but the hands and feet will often be very cold.
- the heart may develop tachycardia (palpitations, irregular beats, mitral valve problems, or heart murmur).
- in the respiratory system, the alveoli (air sacs) of the lungs may be packed with yeast so that the person cannot get adequate breath for speaking, singing, or exercise, and there may be a feeling of suffocation, which may lead to hyperventilation and panic.
- the complete failure of the immune system leaves the body defenceless against all enemy bacteria, viruses, and disease conditions--including cancer.

Fifth Stage

The fifth stage of Candida seems inevitable at this point - rampant systemic Candidiasis is 100% fatal unless it is diagnosed early enough and the yeast overgrowth is killed and the immune system regenerated.

How can an individual with Candida/Candidiasis be helped?

The following steps are recommended:

(Picture right – Candidiasis in male groin)



- 1) Firstly, it is necessary to kill off the excess Candida. This is achieved by starving them of their favourite nutrients - refined sugar and carbohydrates. Unfortunately, the fructose in fruit and the lactose in milk are also used by Candida as a food source, so these should also be avoided. Further, a strict diet free of any refined cereals or any form of sugar is also required. Other banned foods include yeast in any form (including bread. etc); vinegar; alcohol; cheese, dairy products, and mushrooms. However, such a strict diet is not healthy in the long-term, and as the Candida is eradicated, the individual should gradually return to a more varied diet.

Thus , the individual kills off the yeast by a special diet (no starches, no sugars, no yeast, and no dairy products) for a period of at least four weeks. Yeast-killing medicinal herbs and/or drugs may be taken as well, but they are optional, short-term, emergency treatment only. The ultimate goal is to restore the body's own ability to control its own yeast. This can never be accomplished as long as drugs or medicinal herbs are being used as a substitute for the body's proper and natural function.

In the early stages of this treatment, antifungal agents may be used to ensure eradication of

the Candida. Caprylic acid, a fatty acid that occurs naturally in breast milk and coconut oil, is one of the most useful. The herb calendula is also an effective antifungal agent. Garlic supplementation (Garlic Caps (High Strength) 350mg) will also suppress Candida Albicans. Other useful herbs for more difficult cases include barberry bark and thuja. As some of these may also inhibit growth of some of the friendly bacteria, they should be discontinued after six to eight weeks.

At this point, the individual may experience an apparent worsening of symptoms – the so-called ‘die-off’ phase. This is caused by a temporary increase in toxins freed by the Candida as they are destroyed. Although this is an encouraging sign, it can be demoralising if things seem to be getting worse. However, perseverance is the key, and things will soon improve.

As the Candida is gradually destroyed, the last part of the treatment becomes increasingly important - re-seeding the gut with friendly bacteria using ‘probiotics’.

The term ‘probiotic’ literally means ‘for life’, in contrast to the term ‘anti-biotic’, which means ‘against life’. Thus, ‘probiotic’ refers to beneficial bacterial micro-organisms that are an essential part of the gastrointestinal tract - even at birth. Once established and fed by the nutrients found in mother’s milk, these beneficial bacterial micro organisms are the ‘friendly’ and ‘essential’ bacteria

A combination of Lactobacillus acidophilus and Bifidobacteria bifidum seems to be the most effective, preferably in a milk-free base to avoid lactose. Live yoghurt contains other helpful bacteria, and so may also be added to the individual’s diet, provided there is no milk allergy.

- 2) Throughout the process, flush out dead yeast with pure water/herbal cleansing teas - drink plenty.
- 3) Eat only raw, whole, unprocessed foods so that the body gets the level of nutrition required to 1) heal itself (regenerate tissues damaged by yeast), and 2) keep its own yeast under control from this point onwards.

Additional Treatment Information

Always take multiple culture Lactobacillus ACIDOPHILUS (2 gr/day between meals as a supplement) or as in PIIMA yoghurt, following:

- The use of broad spectrum antibiotics, for a period of at least 6 weeks
- Radiation therapy or chemotherapy - during which Candida proliferates very considerably
- Any gastrointestinal enteritis or diarrhoea

Once Candida levels have been reduced it is necessary to repair the damaged mucous membranes of the intestines through taking:

- Zinc, 50 mg daily
- Vit B5 (Calcium Pantothenate), 500-1000 mg daily
- Vit E 250 mg daily

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