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Recurrent Vulvovaginal Candidiasis

What is recurrent vulvovaginal candidiasis (recurrent yeast)?

Defined as 3 or more episodes of symptomatic infection within one year, recurrent yeast is usually due to infection relapse, rather than reinfection of a new yeast strain. Infections are almost always caused by the *C. albicans* strain of yeast. This is seen in women with uncontrolled diabetes, immune deficiencies, prolonged antibiotic or steroid use, and rarely, in those with the inability to resist yeast genetically. However, it also occurs in completely healthy women.

What is the treatment?

Your provider will recommend a medication regimen to treat, which typically includes a vaginal probiotic (recommended brands include RepHresh PRO-B, Good Clean Love, or a compounded prescription). The goal is symptom control rather than cure. We will recommend your partner to be treated, as well, if they are symptomatic.

Importantly, there are lifestyle changes you can make to reduce the incidence and severity of symptoms:

- Avoid soap, fragrance and other products to the vulva
- Use only water-based fragrance-free topical lubricants during sexual activity, if needed
- Avoid constrictive underwear; wear only cotton underwear during the day and no underwear to sleep

Towel Reinfection Protocol

- Start by washing all items that touch the vulva (underwear, towels) in color safe bleach on the sanitize cycle
- Use a regular towel after showering to dry your body. This towel should NOT touch your vulva. This towel can be reused
- Use then a separate wash cloth / hand towel to pat dry the vulva after showering. This towel should NOT be reused. A NEW wash cloth / hand towel should be used after each shower
- All wash cloths / hand towels and underwear that have touched the vulva after the protocol begins should be washed separately with color safe bleach on the sanitize cycle

Yeast Elimination Diet

- It is recommended to trial this diet for *at least 6 weeks* to assess symptom relief
- Maximum 60g carbohydrates consumed per day
- *Avoid* flour-based foods (pizza, bread, bagels), sweetened foods (ice cream, candy), vinegar/ apples cider vinegar, mushrooms, dairy, alcohol (beer, champagne, cider), and fermented foods (yogurt, kimchi, kombucha, sauerkraut)
- If doing well symptom-wise after 6 weeks, you can slowly reintroduce these foods back into your diet over a few week period. It is best to start with one food category at a time (i.e reintroduce flour-based foods on week 1, then reintroduce dairy on week 2 in addition to the flour-based foods already consuming again)