

Thrush

Thrush is a fungal infection caused by an overgrowth of yeast. You can continue to breastfeed while you are treating the infection. Thrush is not serious, but it can cause pain and discomfort for both you and your baby. Your baby's mouth and your nipples may be sore.

DIAGNOSIS: Thrush, also called nipple candida, can only be diagnosed by your doctor. If you suspect that you or your baby have thrush, call your doctor.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS:

If you or your baby have thrush, you may notice the following.

You may have:

- Red or purple nipples
- Shiny areolas (dark part around the nipple)
- Itchy or burning pain in the nipples or breasts
- Flaky appearing nipple

Your baby may have

- White patches in her mouth
- Bright red diaper rash

TREATMENT

Both you and your baby will need to be treated, even if only one of you has symptoms. Yeast can be passed back and forth to each other. Your health care provider will give you an anti-fungal medication. It may be one of the following treatments:

- A prescribed over-the-counter product to apply to your nipples.
- A solution to swab inside your baby's mouth after every feeding.
- An ointment for your baby's diaper area.
- A prescription drug you swallow.

PREVENTION:

- Make sure to follow the treatment for the recommended time even if you start feeling better before or the yeast can grow back.
- Wash your hands before each breastfeeding and after each diaper change. Wash your baby's hands too. Clean your nails well and remove artificial nails where fungus can grow.
- Yeast grows well in moist, dark places. Change wet breast pads and diapers frequently. Avoid breast pads with plastic liners– they keep moisture in.
- Expose your nipples to air after breastfeeding. If this causes a throbbing pain, cover up with a cotton shirt or some other breathable material instead to keep your nipples warm.
- Wash all bras, shirts and towels that touch your breasts in hot, soapy water each day.
- Any plastic part that goes in your baby's mouth or on your breasts should be boiled for 20 minutes daily. (pacifiers, toys, bottle nipples, pump parts).
- Avoid foods that support the growth of yeast such as sugar, dairy products, wheat, nuts, peanut butter, dried fruit and fruit juices.

