

# Family Planning

## Welfare Association of NT Inc.

ABN 38 812 238 738

*Family Planning Welfare Association of the NT Inc exists to provide quality health care and education services in sexual and reproductive health*

# CANDIDA (THRUSH)

## WHAT IS IT?

Candida is a common yeast infection, sometimes called thrush or candidiasis. It occurs when there is an overgrowth of the fungi called Candida. This fungi is normally found in the female genital tract and on the skin.

Candida is not considered a sexually transmissible infection. Both men and women can get genital thrush.

## WHAT CAUSES CANDIDA?

It can be caused by:

- Antibiotic use - most frequent reason. Certain antibiotics kill the useful bacteria called lactobacilli that normally live within the vagina and help the body prevent yeast from growing.
- Hormonal changes associated with oral contraceptive pills, pregnancy and menstrual cycle.
- Diabetes - especially when uncontrolled. The large amount of glucose in blood and urine provides yeast with a source of energy to grow, which may result in an infection.

### Other factors:

- wearing synthetic/tight fitting clothing/stockings
- stress and tiredness
- steroid treatment
- HIV infection

## HOW COMMON IS CANDIDA?

It is estimated that 1 in 5 women aged between 15 and 45 have this fungi present in the vagina.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- itching/soreness of the vagina and external genital area
- creamy or thick white vaginal discharge
- discomfort/pain during sexual intercourse
- men may experience redness/swelling of the head of the penis

## WHAT IS THE TREATMENT?

Women

- avoid synthetic/tight fitting clothes
- avoid bubble baths/bath salts/douches

- avoid gels/soaps/sanitary perfumes
- try different condom brands/lubrication
- diet – decrease sugars, alcohol

Vaginal creams and pessaries are available without script from the chemist. For women with repeated episodes of thrush, longer term treatment can be recommended by your doctor. (pessaries are tablets which you insert into your vagina with an applicator )

#### Men

- Avoid the use of gels/soap
- Wear loose cotton underwear
- Bathe the affected area with a teaspoon of salt to a jug of water two times a day

If you have treated yourself for thrush and it doesn't seem to get better, you are advised to see your Family Planning Clinic or GP for testing and treatment.

There are a number of alternative treatments that are sometimes recommended.

- Plain Yoghurt (lacto-bacillus) can be inserted into the vagina or rubbed in to the genital area.
- Vinegar – 1 part vinegar to 3 parts water.
- Bicarbonate of Soda – bathing in a solution of Bicarb Soda is sometimes helpful

### **Practising safe sex reduces the risk of contracting other sexually transmissible infections (STI's) and HIV**

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL:**

Family Planning on 8948 0144

NT Health Direct 1800 022 222

#### **IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY WE CAN BE FOUND AT:**

Darwin Head Office  
Unit 2, The Clock Tower,  
Dick Ward Drive  
Coconut Grove  
Telephone: (08) 89480144

Clinics at:  
Palmerston Health Precinct  
Telephone: (08) 8948 0144