How to get rid of yeast infections once and for all

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Disclaimer

While this guide is meant to provide you with the information you need to combat yeast infection, it is highly recommend that you consult a physician before you begin any form of treatment for your yeast infection.

If you have any side effects as a result of the following information, consult a physician immediately.

I am not a doctor, and this is provided for informational purposes only.

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Introduction

The term vaginitis is one that is applied to any inflammation or infection of the vagina, and there are many different conditions that are categorized together under this 'broad' heading, including bacterial vaginosis, trichomoniasis and non-infectious vaginitis.

However, for most women, the most common form of vaginitis is that caused by a yeast infection.

Because this is the most common form of vaginitis, this is therefore the particular form of infection that is going to be investigated and analyzed in this book. In this book, you are going to discover:

- Exactly what a yeast infection of this nature is;
- Why it happens;
- Why it is so often difficult to stop it coming back again time after time – this is something that you absolutely have to know;
- What you can do to prevent the condition occurring in the first place; and
- How to treat the condition when it does arise.

This book is not written with the intention of creating anything that resembles a medical-textbook style document, however.

On the contrary, it is intended to be a straightforward, no-nonsense guide to this particular form of yeast infection that can act as a practical hands-on guide to what to do and what not to do should you be unfortunate enough to contract this kind of infection.

As it is estimated that at some time in their lives, three out of every four women will suffer vaginitis caused by a yeast infection, the chances are pretty high that you might suffer one day even if you have been fortunate enough not to have done so thus far.

By reading this book and learning what causes the condition and what you can do to prevent it, you can reduce or perhaps even remove the chances of a yeast infection becoming an embarrassing, itchy or even painful part of you life.

As prevention of any medical condition is always better than having to cure that condition after it has already set in, the information you are going to pick up from reading this book is absolutely essential for every woman, irrespective of their age or their country.

The general yeast infection facts that you must know...

What is yeast?

Yeast is a fungus, so it is a close cousin of mushrooms, toadstools, truffles and puffballs. According to current scientific research, over 100,000 different types of fungus have already been identified, but some estimates suggest that as many as 1.5 million different strains of fungi could exist.

Fungi are not plants, because they lack the chlorophyll that is a primary characteristic of plants. Another factor that distinguishes fungi from plants is their inability to make their own food.

They inhabit climates that range anywhere from cool to tropical, and can be found even in the air that we breathe every day. Fungi will most commonly be found in moist environs, so that they thrive in leftover foods and fruit materials, damp, windfall leafs, soil, manure, brackish water and any other similar environment where nourishment is readily available.

Many fungi are 'good' as far as man is concerned. For example, in addition to mushrooms and truffles, without fungus we would have no bread or beer, because it is the yeast that is added to the bread or beer making process that turns it into what it eventually becomes. Without fungus, the world would be one enormous landfill site, because it is fungus that breaks down trash and thereby returns it to the constituent parts that are eventually returned to the soil.

So, fungi have many characteristics for which we should be grateful. That is not however always true…

You are *covered* in (and full of) fungus….

Whilst it may sound a bit unpleasant, almost from the moment we are born, every person on the face of the earth is living in their own personal primordial soup of micro-organisms such as bacteria, fungi and yeast. These microbes live on your skin, in your mouth, nose and digestive tract so that every part of you both externally and internally is awash with microbes from the moment you are born until you take your very last breath.

It is estimated that among these micro-organisms that live on and in you throughout your life, there are several hundred different types of yeasts. Fortunately, only a very small handful of these yeast cultures are potentially harmful, with the primary cause of yeast infections being one particular strain known as Candida albicans.

This is a yeast that lives in the mouth, throat, nose, intestines and all over the skin of most normal human being. It is also considered to be a normal part of the internal lining of the bowel, and in its normal state actually helps to ensure that regular, normal bowel movements are maintained.

Candida albicans first attaches itself to newborn babies either during or very shortly after birth, but it remains essentially harmless even to a baby as long as that baby has an immune system that is strong enough to keep the growth of the yeast culture in check.

By the age of six months, around 90% of babies will test positive for the presence of Candida albicans. This is why babies whose immune systems are somehow weakened are often prone to oral thrush in the first few months of their life, as this is a yeast infection caused by Candida.

By the time we are adults, almost every person plays host to Candida albicans. However, for the vast majority of the time, this is not going to cause any kind of problem at all, any more than any other of the millions of microbes on your body will do.

This is because for most of the time, there is a balance between all of these different strains of microbes, and as long as this balance is maintained, you will remain healthy and infection free. For example, there are other bacteria on your skin that fight against Candida albicans for the same food sources, and consequently this keeps the Candida cell growth in check.

It is only when this balance is somehow upset that the conditions will prevail whereby a yeast infection can begin to set in.

A general overview of how yeast infections happen…

Yeast infections that occur as a result of Candida albicans are generally referred to by the group name Candiasis and can take many different forms. However, the etymology of how such an infection develops is always pretty similar, irrespective of the particular part of the body that is under attack.

As a general rule, Candida albicans is a yeast which exists in a single cell form. In this form, it remains essentially harmless.

However, all fungi are on a constant watch for sources of nutrition, and once such a nutritional source is located, many millions of these single cell Candida yeast organisms will gravitate towards that source of nutrition. When they do so, they become a mold, and it is at this point where the risk of a yeast infection has begun to develop.

In order to absorb nutrition, fungi have the same ability as animals to secrete hydrolytic enzymes as a way of turning previously indigestible solid matter into foodstuffs that the fungi can feed on. Consequently, when any individual Candida yeast cell identifies a suitable source of food, the whole colony of Candida cells – millions of them – is mobilized so that every individual cell can absorb the maximum amount of nutrition from that food source.

So, what does all this tell you about yeast infections in general, and vaginitis in particular?

What it should indicate is that Candida albicans can only attack and infect your body when conditions are suitable for it to do so.

For example, there are millions of Candida cells on your skin, every one of which is looking for a suitable source of nutrition. However, as long as your skin is clean, dry and unbroken, no such opportunity is going to be presented to the yeast culture to start feeding from you. As a result, you will remain free of infection.

If conditions are not so good, then there are a myriad of different situations where the Candida cells can begin to attack. For example, if your skin is cut or has some kind of abrasion or lesion, then that provides a 'window of opportunity' for the Candida albicans cells to cluster together into mold culture, and begin to infect your body.

You have natural defenses…

As suggested, your body has natural defense mechanisms that will under normal circumstances protect you against any form of Candiasis infection.

Firstly, in order for yeast to successfully invade and infect your body, there has to be a 'doorway' or 'gateway' through which they can enter. A simple example of exactly such a 'gateway' would be a cut or abrasion on your skin.

However, millions of people all over the world suffer skin cuts and abrasions every day – children for example fall over and skin their knees with monotonous regularity – and yet the majority of these people do not suffer yeast infections, or indeed any kind of infection at all. This immediately indicates that the 'doorway' argument of itself is not sufficient to explain yeast infections.

The second consideration is that your skin is covered with many millions of microbes and bacteria, and not all of them are Candida albicans cells.

In fact, many of the bacteria on your skin are in direct conflict with Candida for every source of nutrition, and these so-called 'good' bacteria are more often than not stronger than the yeast cells. In these

circumstances, although there is a doorway to a new source of nutrition, it is these 'good' (non-infectious) bacteria cells that appropriate this particular source of food for themselves and, consequently, there is no infection.

Your body also produces antibodies, and while these antibodies are not in themselves capable of attacking the Candida cells, they do provide assistance to the 'good' bacteria on your skin that helps them to do so.

Finally, if your body's immune system is in tiptop condition, then that single fact significantly reduces the chances of a yeast infection taking a hold. This is an extremely important point to remember, because any immune system weakness is generally considered to be a very significant factor in deciding why some people are more prone to yeast infections than others.

However, as you can see, your body has several different ways of defending itself against all forms of infection including Candiasis, and this is why in the vast majority of situations, infection is unlikely to set in.

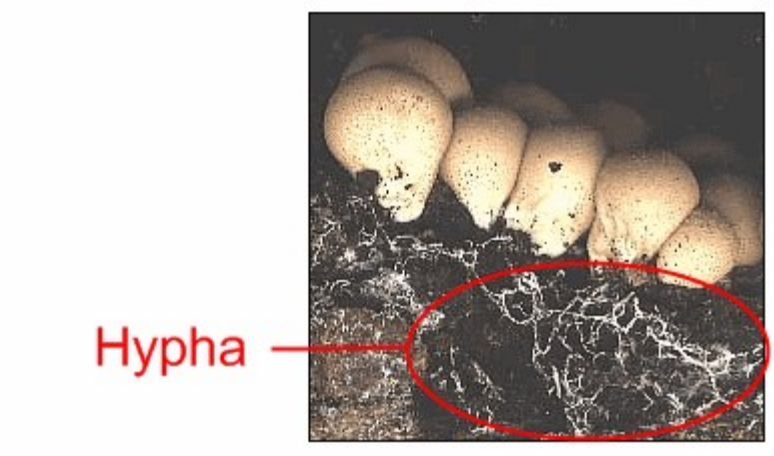
How does yeast mold get its nutrition?

While it is a single yeast cell, Candida albicans is going to cause no problems whatsoever, but as soon as a suitable source of nutrition is found, then millions of such cells will cluster together in order to absorb as much nutrition from that food source as possible.

Fungi do not have stomachs in the way that animals do. In contrast, all fungi live within their food and absorb the goodness from it using what are known as hyphae (hypha in the singular).

Simply described, these are branch or root like extensions that the fungus sinks into the food source in order to be able to absorb as much nutrition from it as possible. This is a common characteristic of all fungi, which is why when you pick a mushroom or find a truffle, you might notice that it has root like extensions of something akin to cobweb consistency sunk deep into the source of nutrition on which it is living.

If you are unfamiliar with this concept, you can see an example of these edible puffballs that have sunk hyphae into the trunk of a decaying tree:



The bad news is that this is exactly what happens when you have a yeast infection anywhere on your body!

The yeast mold burrows hyphae down into your skin in between your skin cells and then proceeds to apply the hydrolytic enzymes which it needs to secrete to turn your skin matter and the serum in your blood into a substance which will nourish the yeast mold cells so that they can thrive and proliferate.

These hyphae will burrow as deep as they can in order to absorb as much nutrition as they are able to find, and will continue to do so for as long as they are allowed to continue with their invasive behavior.

I am certain that this notion of having some foreign organism burrowing down underneath your skin is a singularly unpleasant one, but the critical thing to understand from this is that a yeast infection does not take place only on the surface of your skin.

Irrespective of the kind of yeast infection that you have managed to contract, and without any reference to the part of your body that is infected, the same thing always applies. Under any patch of infected skin, there are yeast cells burrowing away, and your job is to prevent them doing so as quickly and as effectively as you can.

What conditions are best for a yeast infection to develop?

As a general rule, yeast infections tend to occur in those areas of the body where general conditions are most favorable for yeast and mold to develop. As we have already seen, fungus 'prefers' moist conditions in which to develop and grow, so it is those parts of the body where moisture is commonly found that are most likely to be susceptible to yeast infection attacks.

Consequently, it is the following parts of the body that are most susceptible to a yeast infection outbreak:

- Mouth and/or throat;
- Genital area;
- Armpits;
- Anal area;
- Nasal cavity;
- Around the finger and toenails;
- Navel;
- Area between the toes.

In addition, because your digestive tract is also full of Candida albicans cells, it is possible to suffer an internal yeast infection.

However, because this only tends to happen in people whose immune systems are already seriously weakened by other medical conditions such as HIV or the adverse effects of chemotherapy, such an infection is likely to prove fatal in up to 75% of cases.

There are people in certain occupations who are more likely to suffer specific types of yeast infection because of the day-to-day requirements of their job. For example, it is common for those who work in the kitchen areas of restaurants to suffer yeast infections around the hands and nails far more regularly than other people, because such individuals are likely to have their hands in water for a considerable part of every working day.

People at particular ages become more susceptible to specific types of yeast infections. For example, most babies will at some point suffer from diaper rash, which is yet another form of yeast infection brought on by warm, moist conditions where bacteria (from bodily waste products) are far more plentiful than is normal.

Summary so far…

We have established that almost from the moment you were born, your skin and the inside of your digestive tract is home to millions of microorganisms, amongst them the Candida albicans yeast cells that are responsible for causing yeast infections.

You already know that these yeast cells are completely harmless 99.9% of the time, and it is only when specific bodily conditions favor it that these cells will proliferate and cause an infection.

It has been highlighted that, because there are certain conditions which favor the growth of fungi, it is those areas of your body where these conditions are most likely to exist that are most prone to yeast infection attack.

With all of these basic 'yeast infection 101' facts established, it is now time to start looking at the specifics of what is probably the most common form of yeast infection, vaginitis.

What is vaginitis?

General overview

The term vaginitis covers several different medical conditions, the common factor of which is the fact that all of these conditions cause inflammation of the vagina and vulva.

However, for most women, the very word vaginitis equates to 'yeast infection', which is the reason that this is the way the word is being used throughout this book.

As will probably be evident by now, such an infection is generally caused by an over-proliferation of Candida albicans cells, the reasons for which will be investigated in detail later.

Possible symptoms…

This in turn leads to a wide range of possible symptoms including:

- A discharge that can range in color and consistency from being thin and colorless to white or yellow and lumpy with the consistency of ricotta cheese. Sometimes this discharge might have an odor similar to that of the yeast that is used for baking bread, whilst at other times, it will be completely odorless.
- Swollen or inflamed vaginal area and vulva, with a clearly defined infected area.
- Generally, the infected area will be itchy or painful, and while this infected area is likely to be angry, raised and red, the edges of it are likely to be very easily demarcated from the surrounding skin.
- Light vaginal bleeding may also be noted, especially if the skin of the infected areas becomes broken.
- Pain both during and following sexual intercourse.
- Urination that is both painful and far more regular than usual.

But, beware…

These are symptoms that are possibly indicative of vaginitis.

However, you should remember that there are several types of infections that can be grouped together under this heading, and it does not therefore follow that these symptoms are a clear indicator of a yeast infection.

Do not jump to conclusions if you have any kind of vaginal problem that suggests that it *might* be yeast infection.

Most importantly, do not fall for the notion that you will often see propounded on many websites that all you need to do if you *suspect*

that you have a yeast infection is to seek suitable over-the-counter treatments.

Firstly, assuming that you are not a qualified medical professional, you may have completely misdiagnosed your condition, and therefore it is inevitable that the over-the-counter treatment you purchase will be the wrong one.

Secondly, even if your 'informed guess' is correct, and you really have contracted a yeast infection, there are dozens of over-the-counter treatments available, and the chances of you choosing the one that is most suited to your particular requirements are very slim.

The final problem with self diagnosis followed by using over-the-counter vaginitis 'cures' is that many of these treatments will be anti-fungal creams and ointments.

Remember that the way that a yeast infection works is by burrowing hyphae as far under your skin as possible. It follows that applying an antifungal cream or lotion that will only work on the surface or just below it is only likely to have a very limited positive effect at best.

This is one of the reasons that some women have a vaginitis problem that seems to come back time and again, no matter what they try to do to get rid of the problem.

Simply applying over-the-counter antifungal creams to the infected area can only ever really have a fairly peripheral surface effect, and does not address the root cause of the problem. Consequently, while these antifungal treatments will ostensibly get rid of the infection, the fungus cells that were responsible for the problem in the first place are still in place, ingesting nourishment somewhere far beneath the surface of your skin.

From this brief analysis of using over-the-counter treatments, it should become obvious why so many women have a chronic vaginitis problem which never seems to fully go away.

Because the kind of over-the-counter treatments that people commonly use do not have the ability to penetrate deeply enough under the skin to eradicate the root cause of the yeast infection problem, it is almost inevitable that the problem will return again, and probably do so sooner rather than later.

The alternative to purchasing and using over-the-counter treatments is to visit your friendly neighborhood medical practitioner to seek their advice and an appropriate medical solution for your condition, but as you will read later, this is not always the most advisable of actions.

Specific steps for preventing vaginitis

It is believed that during the course of their lives, 75% of women are likely to suffer a vaginal yeast infection.

After you have suffered vaginitis once, it becomes considerably more likely that you will do so again, particularly if you treat the condition on a peripheral level, rather than attacking the root cause of your yeast infection.

However, even for those who suffer regular yeast infection attacks, there must have been the first time, and before the first occurrence of a medical condition that has probably caused them a great deal of misery ever since, there were many things that they could have done in order to reduce the risk of that first infection ever happening.

Yeast infections thrive in moist conditions, so the first step that you can take in an effort to reduce the likelihood of a yeast infection is to do whatever you can to limit moisture around the vaginal areas.

For example, make sure that after every bath, shower or visit to the bathroom, you are completely dry and use a baby-powder style powder to keep yourself dry for a long as possible.

We will consider other specific areas of your life that you should think about in this respect over the following sections.

Consider the clothes you wear

The fact that yeast needs moist conditions to thrive should indicate that anything you can do to keep this particular area of your body clean, cool and dry is likely to thwart the yeast mold and stop it developing.

Consequently, you should give a great deal of thought to what you wear each day.

For example, wearing unbleached cotton underwear is far more conducive to conditions that will frustrate the yeast, because these materials allow your body to breathe and reduce the amount of natural perspiration at the same time.

Avoid wearing plastic-based man-made fibers immediately next to the skin, with nylon underwear or pantyhose being a big no-no.

If you wear trousers or jeans, make sure that they are loose fitting, because tight clothing that is worn for any length of time will induce exactly the right ‘warm and sweaty’ conditions that the yeast cells need to multiply and grow.

Whenever possible, wear clothing that is loose and comfortable, such as kaftan style all-in-one robes, and if, for example, you are doing so at

home, then dispensing with underwear entirely is a great way of ensuring that you stay cool and dry.

Be aware of your hormones

It is a common question asked by many women as to why it should be that yeast infections in the genital area are far more common in women than they are in men.

This is not to say that men never suffer a similar condition, but the reason is believed to relate to the female sex hormone progesterone.

This is a hormone the levels of which are significantly elevated during the second half of the menstrual cycle, as well as during the menopause and pregnancy. Consequently, at all of these times, it is far more likely that you will suffer a yeast infection, but because progesterone is present at all times, women are naturally far more prone to yeast infections.

The reason that progesterone makes yeast infections more likely is because it increases the production of glycogen in and around the vaginal tissues. Glycogen is a natural starch that is converted into sugar easily, and as you will discover later, this provides an ideal breeding ground for yeast.

Beware of irritating chemicals

There are literally dozens of ways or places that potentially irritating or even harmful chemicals can come into contact with your skin, and all of these represent a yeast infection danger because they can weaken the skin (remember the notion of yeast needing a suitable 'gateway'?).

For example, the detergent that you wash your clothes in may contain chemicals that are likely to irritate your skin. Even if these chemicals have no inherent danger, everyone is different, and some people are allergic to certain chemical materials with which 98% of the population has no problems whatsoever.

So just to be on the safe side, every time you have washed your underwear, boil it for five or ten minutes immediately afterwards in order to purge the residue of detergent and/or chemicals.

You will sometimes see websites that recommend that you ask your medical attendant for a suitable suppository as your primary treatment for vaginitis. While this may be effective for some people, it is likely that such a medical aid is going to contain antifungal drugs or chemicals, and once again, you do not know what your own personal reaction to these chemicals is likely to be.

This is not necessarily saying that you should not try such a treatment, but if you do so, you should be aware that there are potential side-

effects or even an allergic reaction that you might suffer as a result of doing so.

Stop reading this book now and head off to the bathroom to read the labels on all of the soap and detergent products that use to wash your body with each day. Is every one of the materials that you use to clean the most sensitive areas of your body 100% natural and entirely chemical free?

Check the soap that you use on a daily basis, as well as bubble-baths, shower gels and any other related cleaning materials. If they are not all completely chemical free, then you should change to a more suitable brand that is entirely natural.

Do you douche regularly? If so, are you absolutely certain that you know exactly what you are using to do so? If not, make an effort to find out as quickly as possible, and then make any necessary changes to reduce the risk of applying potentially harmful chemicals in the one area of your body where you really do not want to do so.

Basically, the simple rule is that you should never use anything that could possibly be infused with potentially harmful chemicals anywhere near your vaginal area.

Sexual practices

While there is no doubt that yeast infections are far more of a problem for women than they are ever going to be for men, that does not necessarily mean that men are completely immune.

Indeed, men (especially those who are uncircumcised) can suffer yeast infections in the genital area, and it is possible for this infection to be passed backwards and forwards between two sexual partners.

Consequently, if you have any reason to suspect that your partner has an infection, you should both practice safe sex by using condoms at all times.

Having said this, there are certain condoms that appear to be equally likely to exacerbate the infection problem as help to prevent the spread of it, so you should be very careful to read the labels before buying.

Pre-existing medical conditions

There are some pre-existing medical conditions that will increase your susceptibility to Candiasis because there are diseases that affect the chemical balances within your body in such a way that they increase your vulnerability to yeast infections.

A primary example would be uncontrolled or badly controlled diabetes. As most people are aware, diabetes is a very serious medical condition

in which blood sugar levels play a significant role, and as you will discover, sugar is in turn a very significant factor in all yeast infection scenarios, including vaginitis.

Lifestyle considerations...

Do not underestimate the importance of the life that you lead when it comes to establishing why you might be more or less prone to yeast infections than other people.

The fact is, everything that you do each and every day can make you more or less susceptible to infections and diseases, and this applies no more and no less to yeast infections than it does to any other kind of medical ailment. How you choose to live your life can have a very direct bearing on your all-round state of health and wellness, and that will in turn have a significant effect on your ability to resist.

What you have to appreciate is the fact that, in the same way that suffering an unpleasant, embarrassing discharge or uncomfortable itching is a symptom of having vaginitis, vaginitis itself is a symptom of something going wrong in your life on a far more fundamental level.

You should approach your problem on a totally 'holistic' whole-body basis, and change your life in whatever ways are necessary to reduce your susceptibility to medical ailments.

Failure to address your problems in this way is another reason why a yeast infection problem could return to haunt you time and again. While taking medicines and applying creams or lotions might get rid of the problem on a temporary basis, unless you make the necessary 'grass roots' fundamental lifestyle changes that have to be made that will help to build up your resistance levels, you are never going to be able to get rid of your yeast infection permanently.

A weakened immune system and stress

One of the primary defenses that you have against yeast infections is a strong and resilient immune system. If for any reason your immune system is weakened or not performing as well as it should do, then that naturally makes you more susceptible to infections.

Yeast infections are far more capable of wreaking havoc within your body if your immune system is weaker than it should be for some reason.

Many medical conditions and the treatments that are used to remedy those conditions weaken your immune system as a natural side-effect. For example, anyone who suffers from HIV, leukemia or any other virulent form of cancer is going to find that both the medical condition itself weakens their immune system and that the treatment that is used to remedy that condition makes the situation even worse.

However, your immune system can be weakened for many reasons, including far less threatening situations or circumstances associated with your daily lifestyle.

For instance, if your day-to-day working situation is one that prevents you from eating a sensible, balanced diet, then it is likely that the lack of sufficient and appropriate nutrients will weaken your immune system to at least some degree.

Despite the fact that Candida albicans has been with you almost from the day you were born, your immune system still considers it to be a foreign invader, and it is therefore constantly fighting against yeast 24/7.

Not only does this become considerably more difficult to do effectively if your immune system is already weakened, it is also now becoming apparent that the yeast overgrowth which is an indicator of infection forces your immune system to work harder to maintain control of your body balance, which is a primary purpose of your immune system in the first place.

It is now believed by some leading authorities that every time you suffer another bout of yeast infection, you are further weakening your immune system by making it work harder to fight off that infection. Your immune system gradually gets 'more tired' and becomes weaker, making it less capable of fighting off future infectious attacks.

Many women go through periods in their life when for one reason or another they become more anemic than they would normally be. This is likely to cause a weakening of your ability to fight against infection.

Irrespective of the reason why you believe your immune system may be weakened, it is advisable to seek medical tests to establish the scientific reality of your condition.

Another thing that can have an adverse effect on your internal chemical balances and your immune system are the levels of stress that you have to put up with on a daily basis.

No matter how well you deal with stress, it is another thing that is going to adversely affect the chemical balances of your body, which makes you more susceptible to infection and illnesses. Stress can have a very negative effect on your digestive system, and from there, the malaise can spread throughout your body.

This is a widely recognized physiological phenomenon, one that can cause a great many symptoms, all of which indicate that 'things are not right' in a very general way. For instance, you may feel listless,

permanently tired and unable to concentrate on whatever it is you are supposed to be doing for any length of time.

In this situation, your susceptibility to vaginitis is significantly increased simply because you do not have the wherewithal to fight the infection on either a conscious or unconscious level.

Perhaps the number one enemy is...

Earlier in this report, I highlighted the fact that using over-the-counter treatments for vaginal yeast infections will often be ineffective at best, and could even be harmful in a worst-case scenario.

The most sensible advice would be to visit your medical practitioner. However, before you do so, there is something that you must know about the advice that your doctor is likely to give you *before* you go to visit him or her.

The first thing that you might have to do when seeking the advice of your medical practitioner for a vaginal yeast infection problem is to set aside your natural proclivity to believe everything that qualified medical professionals say. While I have no doubt that in 99% of situations, you should listen to what your medical practitioner tells you, when you visit them to report what you believe to be vaginitis, it may prove to be the exception to the rule.

Your friendly neighborhood medical practitioner is an extremely busy person, and the pressure on them to get the job done every day is only ever going to expand. For example, the number of grossly overweight people in almost every developed Western country is increasing at a phenomenal rate. That is placing a massive strain on the ability and resources of medical services throughout the world to cope with a torrent of what are (at heart) self-induced medical problems.

Medical professionals nowadays have less and less time available to deal with each individual patient that they have to see. Given this fact, it is almost unbelievable that most doctors get almost every decision that they ever make completely on-the-button correct, but the fact is, they still do!

When it comes to treating yeast infections, however, it is still relatively common for medical practitioners to prescribe antibiotics as the primary treatment resource.

It is now widely understood that, rather than improving the situation, antibiotics are far more likely to exacerbate it. In addition, it becomes considerably more likely that any future yeast infections that might have happened without antibiotics become almost completely inevitable <u>because</u> of them.

Modern broad spectrum antibiotics are effective for killing germs and bacteria. However, they are not without their downsides.

Firstly, if you have to take antibiotics for anything other than the shortest period of time, then your system does develop a degree of reliance on those antibiotics. Consequently, your own natural ability to resist diseases and infections is reduced, and once the additional 'protective layer' that is provided by these antibiotics is removed, you are naturally more susceptible to future infections.

In short, if you have previously been taking a broad spectrum antibiotic for any other medical condition, your natural immune system is now slightly weaker than it was previously, and you are therefore more likely to contract a yeast infection.

If your medical practitioner diagnosed a yeast infection and prescribed antibiotics as the primary treatment for your condition, here is what is going to happen when you start taking those drugs.

The antibiotic that you are taking will undoubtedly be an effective bacteria killer. Unfortunately, antibiotics are powerful rather than smart, and they do not have the ability to distinguish between good bacteria and the bad kind. Consequently, if you take antibiotics to treat your vaginitis, they will kill all bacteria indiscriminately.

This includes the good bacteria that will normally keep Candida albicans in check. You have a situation where Candida can rampage throughout your body without a great deal of resistance after you stop taking the antibiotics in question, making it almost inevitable that your yeast infection problem is going to return within a very short period of time.

Evidence of this can be seen from the fact that it is normally extremely difficult to prepare a yeast culture from the skin of a healthy person who has not taken antibiotics. However, within only 48 hours of starting to take tetracycline (a commonly prescribed antibiotic), it becomes easy to prepare such a culture from almost anyone.

So, it is now pretty widely accepted that, as far as yeast infections are concerned, antibiotics are probably 'Public Enemy Number 1', and that it is the widespread societal exposure to antibiotics that has made each of us more susceptible to yeast infections.

Unfortunately, the problem is not as easy to tackle as it might first appear. Although antibiotics do not kill viruses or viral infections (they only exterminate bacteria), it is extremely common for antibiotics to be prescribed for even the most common viral conditions such as colds and flu.

Consequently, it might be natural to assume that stopping accepting antibiotics for conditions such as these might over time reverse the situation.

This would be true apart from one particularly insidious and little known factor.

It is not only human beings who are widely and commonly administered antibiotics. It also happens with domesticated animals, particularly those on farms, because those animals represent the livelihood of the farmer in question, and the farmer is likely to do everything possible to keep them as healthy as they can so that they fetch the best prices when they are sold.

Unless you are consuming a diet that is based on organically reared animals and farming practices, then you are probably inadvertently consuming foodstuffs such as meat, poultry, dairy produce and eggs that carry residues of animal antibiotics within them!

Consequently, unless you are sticking to a strictly organic diet, you are under constant attack from antibiotic drugs even when you are not aware that it is happening.

You can take a conscious decision to stop accepting broad spectrum antibiotics for every medical condition that you ever suffer, but removing antibiotic laden foods from your diet is going to be considerably more difficult unless you switch to organic foods only.

This is not, however, the only important dietary consideration that you have to take into account.

The critical importance of diet...

On a more general level, it is absolutely necessary to take into account every individual aspect of your own personal diet and nutrition.

This is important because every individual is different from everyone else, and people's nutritional requirements will also differ from individual to individual.

Furthermore, it seems likely that while chemical balance in the body is an important element of maintaining a strong immune system, it is probably more important in some people than in others.

With these provisos in place, however, there are certain changes that you should consider making to your overall daily diet that it is believed could play a significant role in reducing your susceptibility to yeast infections.

Over the following few pages, I will therefore detail and analyze many of the foods that are likely to increase or decrease your susceptibility to yeast infections, with the 'bad guys' listed first:

Sugar: If you reduce the amount of sugar in your daily diet, then you will significantly reduce your susceptibility to yeast infections at one and the same time.

Yeast feeds on sugars, which is why, for example, people who suffer from badly controlled diabetes are far more likely to suffer yeast infections than others. As a result of their inability to control their condition, their blood is far richer in sugar than that of other people, and that sugar provides exactly the sustenance the yeast needs to thrive.

Nowadays, the diet of most people who live in the developed countries of the West is dominated by sugar rich products, to the extent that the sugar consumption of the average US citizen has more than doubled over the last 20 years (and is the almost concurrent growth of obesity over the same period any coincidence?).

With the amount of sugar that the average person takes in nowadays, it is absolutely physically impossible for anyone other than an Olympic quality athlete to use all of the energy that is being provided by that daily intake. At the same time, your body is constantly working overtime to find every possible way of using the excess sugars that you feed into it, and one of the ways that it does so is to feed a proportion of those extra sugars into your bloodstream.

Consequently, there is now a far higher percentage of sugar in the blood serum of the average Western citizen than there was even as recently as 10 years ago, which means that you are providing a far more plentiful food supply for any yeast that manages to successfully invade your body.

As an example of the attraction that sugar has for yeast cells, you have to think no further than the process of brewing beer. This whole process relies on the fact that the brewer's yeast will feed on the natural sugars in the other ingredients involved in the process (e.g. malt, hops and barley) and turn that sugar into alcohol as a result of the process.

This does not only apply to commercially produced, purified sugars or the products that use them in the manufacturing process either.

It is a rule that can be applied to all sugars including natural sugars such as those contained in fruit juice, honey, molasses, maple syrup, dextrose, fructose, corn syrup and so on.

All of these simple carbohydrates are exactly the kind of materials that yeast most wants to feast on. By reducing the amount of carbohydrates that you take in as an integral part of your every day diet, you will significantly reduce the likelihood of suffering any form of yeast infection.

There is another significant benefit to reducing the amount of sugar you consume. By doing so, you are likely to reduce your weight over the medium to longer term, and that will automatically lend itself to you becoming fitter, healthier and stronger.

The more healthy you are, the better you are going to be able to resist future infections (enjoying your life considerably more at the same time). Therefore, reducing the amount of sugar you eat or take in drinks every day is going to produce many additional health benefits, as well as reducing your susceptibility to yeast infections.

Yeast products or baked foods: By ingesting yeast rich foodstuffs and drinks, you are naturally increasing the yeast levels inside your body. This is not necessarily going to be any problem for you as long as you are fit and healthy with a strong, resilient immune system.

However, when you are suffering from or susceptible to a yeast infection, products such as beer, wine, leavened bread, brewers yeast, pizzas, soy sauce, pastries and cakes all provide 'back-up troops' to the Candida albicans that are already present in your system, and this extra support is not really something that you want to provide.

'Mold'-based and fermented foods: These foods fall into a similar category to the one above, in that by consuming foods like cheese, mustard, vinegar and any other condiments that are based on vinegar, you are providing extra ammunition for the Candida infection in your body to expand still further. Once again, these foodstuffs will do you no harm whatsoever when you are completely fit and healthy, but if you are susceptible to yeast infections, it is probably best to avoid them wherever possible.

Dairy products: One of the primary ingredients of milk is lactose, and your body is going to treat this as it would any other sugar. Consequently, you should cut out any products made with milk, such as ice cream and full milk yoghurt at the same time as starting to take your coffee or tea without milk. If you have to have milk in your drink, try to switch to soy milk.

We have now seen many foodstuffs that you should reduce or even remove from your diet completely if you want to reduce your susceptibility to yeast infections in the future. It is therefore reasonable to ask, what foodstuffs should you eat?

The following list will give you a few ideas of foods that are not likely to provide any sustenance to Candida albicans, and also foods that you should consider because they have a positive effect in helping you fight against yeast infections.

Foods that you can eat without any risk of 'feeding' your yeast infection include these:

- Wherever possible, try to eat 'staple' **gluten free foods** such as rice or corn instead of foodstuffs that contain gluten like wheat and barley. The idea that some people are gluten resistant is gaining more widespread acceptance, and it also appears likely that the same people may carry a slightly higher risk of suffering from yeast infections.
- We have already established that many non-organic meat products are likely to be high in antibiotic chemicals. Consequently, it is preferable to eat **non-meat based protein alternatives** such as tofu, or failing that, at least make sure that all of the meat-based products you eat (including poultry) are completely organically reared.
- **Whole grains** such as brown rice offer a very healthy option when you are looking for alternatives that will not exacerbate your susceptibility to yeast infections.
- **Raw green vegetables** are perfect for inclusion in your new healthy diet. They contain many of the vital trace elements and vitamins that you need, but none of the potentially harmful sugars that you will find in some fruits, for example. If you cannot take your vegetables raw, try steaming them.
- **Some oily fish** are high in essential fatty acids, and provide a tasty and highly nutritional alternative to meat products. Mackerel, herring and tuna would all fall into this category.

In addition to these foodstuffs that provide no additional nutrition to the Candida albicans that are causing your infection, there are a handful of natural substances that have antifungal qualities that you can take advantage of as a first step towards attacking your yeast infection 'from the inside'.

For example, the active ingredient in garlic known as allicin is an acknowledged antifungal agent. However, because allicin (which is the substance that gives garlic its pungent smell) is destroyed by cooking, you are going to reap the highest anti-yeast infection benefits by eating it raw.

It is believed that the smell of garlic can hang around on your breath for up to three days – and therefore, a far more practical and sensible alternative might be to seek a local source of garlic pills or capsules, or perhaps try to find a suitable online source.

Another naturally occurring substance that is known to have strong antifungal qualities is tea tree oil, but while this substance is fine for using externally, it has still not been proved to be completely safe for ingestion, and you should not therefore be tempted to consume it.

On the other hand, it is now established that caprylic acid (which, despite its slightly scary sounding name is in fact a medium chain fatty acid that is naturally found in coconut and palm oil) is now widely accepted as an effective treatment for Candiasis on a general level. Again, it would make sense to try to find caprylic acid locally before turning to the internet to search for suppliers who can deliver.

As an alternative, take Lactobacillus acidophilus in a capsule or powder form twice a day to get rid of an existing vaginitis problem, or once a day to help keep future infections at bay. This is the most common form of 'good' bacteria (most commonly, this is the active ingredient in live yoghurts), and therefore taking a regular dosage of Lactobacillus will help to boost your body's natural defenses against future yeast infections.

Other foodstuffs that are believed to help stave off yeast infections include:

- Onions;
- Almonds;
- Seaweed;
- Aloe Vera;
- Cayenne pepper;
- Cumin;
- Limes and lemons;
- Broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower and sprouts;
- Apple cider vinegar.

Many of these foods have a certain multi-dimensional 'medical condition fighting' character, in that they provide benefits on several different levels, all of which can help to combat yeast infections amongst other problems.

For example, broccoli is rich in vitamin C., but it is also a vegetable that is rich in what are known as phytochemicals.

These are the natural chemical substances that are present in many individual foodstuffs which can enhance the benefits of eating them.

The fact is, there are some foodstuffs which are known to have an inhibiting effect on the growth of yeast cells. Consequently, eating such a food on its own it is going to provide a significant boost to your body's ability to fight the worst effects of yeast infection.

However, recent research has begun to indicate that it is combinations of different phytochemicals contained in different foodstuffs that produce the best results.

For example, it seems likely that while the phytochemicals in garlic (Allicin) and those to be found in broccoli (sulforaphane) have powerful antifungal qualities on their own, these effects are multiplied many times over when the two foodstuffs are taken together.

However, this idea of various different foods that contain different phytochemicals working better in combination than they do in isolation is a relatively new one, and so far, it has been difficult to establish 'pairings' that work well in all cases (although the previous example seems to be one that is 'best of the bunch' so far).

This would appear to come back to the notion that every individual is different, and therefore their nutritional requirements are different as well.

Another phytochemical that has been proven to have strong antifungal qualities is lycopene, which is the red pigment that gives ripe tomatoes their color which can also be found in pink grapefruit, red oranges and watermelon.

Apricots, cherries, strawberries and cinnamon all contain coumarin, while apples, bilberries and prunes contain ursolic acid.

Both of these phytochemicals are believed to have antifungal qualities and therefore including them in your diet (but not too many – remember the sugar) will undoubtedly help to reduce the chances of suffering yeast infections in the future.

You can also supplement your diet with vitamins that will help to boost your immune system, but do ensure that the vitamins you are taking on board are completely yeast free. A mixture of vitamins B1, B2, B3 and B6, together with vitamins A, C and E would be effective, and in each case, follow the recommended daily dose.

Some things are deadly for Candida...

Whilst there is no doubt that taking antibiotics to treat a yeast infection has some significant downsides, there is also no doubt that antibiotics are deadly as far as Candida albicans is concerned. Fortunately, so is caprylic acid, which has far less debilitating side-effects.

Nevertheless, when you suffer from persistent chronic vaginal yeast infections, you have to tackle that problem in two different ways.

Firstly, you tackle the problem systematically by trying to reduce the overgrowth of Candida albicans cells throughout your body. You would do this by making the lifestyle changes already indicated, adjusting your diet as highlighted in the previous section, and by taking caprylic acid capsules or tablets by mouth.

The second method of treatment for your vaginitis would be topical, (i.e. by applying external treatments to the infected area) but we will come back to this the moment.

When you take caprylic acid, it is possible that, depending upon the severity of the Candida albicans overgrowth and the amount of caprylic acid taken, you could kill millions of Candida cells in a very short period of time.

When this happens, these dying cells will release toxins into your body, and depending upon the number of the cells, it may be that your body simply cannot expel the dying cells and their toxins quick enough.

In this case, it is not uncommon to suffer what is known as a Herxheimer reaction, or a 'die off'. Generally speaking, such a reaction is likely to last for no more than a few hours but it can carry on for a few days if you try to treat your condition too quickly. This 'die off' period is not dangerous, but it can be unpleasant, with bloating, dizziness and nausea all being common symptoms.

If you suffer such a reaction, the answer is simple. Keep your medication slow and steady, and if you feel any of these symptoms coming on, stop for 24 hours because within that period of time, the reaction will almost certainly pass.

You can then start taking the caprylic acid once again, but obviously, do not be quite so hasty this time around!

Topical vaginal yeast infection treatments...

- Wipe the vaginal area with garlic oil or tea tree oil several times a day.
- Alternatively or additionally, put a few drops of either oil on a tampon, and insert it into the vagina for 20 minutes at a time twice a day. You could also do the same and leave it in-situ overnight.
- Either insert a complete clove of garlic into the vagina, or put a couple of cloves into a soft muslin bag, and insert that instead. Leave for 20 to 30 minutes as necessary.
- Crush a clove of garlic and use the resulting paste to spread around the outside of the vagina. This may sting a little, but unless there is a serious burning sensation, all that is happening is the natural antifungal qualities of the garlic doing their job, so it's okay!
- Try running a warm bath, and adding a cup full of Apple cider vinegar to the water before soaking in it for 20 to 30 minutes.
- Buy organic yoghurt with active live cultures, and insert some into the vagina three times a day. You can also use this yoghurt as a 'lotion' that you can rub on the outside to bring immediate relief.

Conclusion

Vaginal yeast infection or vaginitis is not something that you would wish on anyone. Not only is such a condition likely to be extremely unpleasant, it can also be highly embarrassing and often painful as well.

Nevertheless, it is a condition that is suffered by millions of women all over the world every year, and perhaps the biggest problem that most of those women are likely to have when their worst nightmare comes true is that those that they turn to for help may not prove to be a great deal of help at all.

As we established very early in this book, there is no way that you can solve a vaginal yeast infection problem permanently with antifungal lotions and creams.

The very nature of fungi and the way that they burrow down into your flesh to find food, dictates that such lotions and creams are never going to be able to permeate deeply enough under your skin to wipe out the root cause of the infection. As a consequence, even if an antifungal cream that you have obtained over-the-counter or by prescription does get rid of your infection, it is extremely unlikely that it has done so thoroughly, which makes it equally likely that the infection is going to return as soon as the antifungal effects have worn off.

I am also certain that you now understand why antibiotics can do more harm than good, and that applies whether you are taking them as a specific treatment for your yeast infection or for any other reason. Antibiotics naturally increase your reliance on their ability to cure all of your medical ailments and that reduces your body's ability to stand up for itself.

Add this to the fact that antibiotics kill all bacteria, good or bad, completely indiscriminately, and that they are creeping into your life hidden and unbidden in the foods that you eat, and you begin to appreciate the enormity of the antibiotics problem.

The correct approach to take to getting rid of your vaginitis once and for all is to address your problem on two levels.

The first 'level' is a whole body, holistic one. You must appreciate that your susceptibility to yeast infections is a result of the lifestyle that you lead, the foods that you eat (or don't eat), the chemical imbalances that probably exist in your body because of your diet and the stress of your daily lifestyle, and so on.

As a result of all of these things, your immune system and natural resistance to infection and diseases have been beaten down too low, so

you need to start taking the necessary steps that you have just read about to start redressing the balance as soon as possible.

There are undoubtedly certain aspects of being a woman that you can do nothing about. For example, you can do little or nothing to control the variations in progesterone that make you more susceptible to yeast infections at certain times than at others.

Nevertheless, making the lifestyle changes that you have read of in this book will naturally reduce your susceptibility to yeast infections in the future.

On a second level, you have seen that there are various natural treatments that can be applied to any vaginal yeast infection that you are suffering at the moment that will help to bring both immediate relief and a reduction in the severity of your present condition.

My final recommendation is, try not to view vaginal yeast infections in isolation. In the majority of cases, such infections happen as a result of a combination of circumstances, some of which are specifically related to your vaginal area, but many of which are not.

Such an infection happens because of the life you lead, and in order to remedy the situation on a permanent basis, you must therefore address the problem in the same way.