

## CANDIDIASIS (THRUSH)

Thrush is a vaginal condition that is usually caused by an overgrowth of a yeast-like fungus called *Candida albicans*. This organism can produce symptoms commonly known as thrush.

### Causes

Thrush happens more commonly when someone:

- is taking antibiotics;
- is pregnant;
- is about to have a period;
- has diabetes; and
- has an impaired immune system.

Other factors may also be associated with thrush include:

- minor skin abrasions due to sexual activity or tight clothing;
- other skin conditions of the genitals – dermatitis, eczema, psoriasis; and
- douching, which may interfere with normal flora in the vagina.

### Symptoms

For women the most common symptom is genital itching. Thrush is sometimes associated with a thick white vaginal discharge. The genital area can also look red and there may be pain during sexual intercourse.

Men may have an itch and redness, particularly on the head of the penis. Sometimes the itch is located in the groin.

### Treatments

Thrush may be treated with antifungal creams, pessaries (tablets which are inserted into the vagina) or oral tablets.

Many vaginal creams and pessaries are available over the counter at pharmacies.

Prolonged or frequently recurring thrush needs to be investigated by a doctor.

Frequent use of antifungal creams may lead to dermatitis.

***NOTE: Some anti-candida treatments may reduce the safety of condoms.***

### How to Help Prevent Recurrent Thrush

The following suggestions may be helpful:

- wear loose cotton underwear;
- avoid wearing tight pants, jeans, pantyhose or tights; and
- uncircumcised men should wash with water only and dry under the foreskin daily.

*Sexual Health Service Tasmania is staffed Monday to Friday from 8.30 am until 5.00 pm. Clinic times vary from site to site so please contact your local office for details (see contact details on the back of this pamphlet).*

**Sexual Health Service  
Clinical Services**

**HOBART**

60 Collins Street  
Hobart 7000  
Ph: (03) 6233 3557

**LAUNCESTON**

42 Canning Street  
Launceston 7250  
Ph: (03) 6336 2216

**DEVONPORT**

23 Steele Street  
Devonport 7310  
Ph: (03) 6421 7759

**BURNIE**

11 Jones Street  
BURNIE 7320  
Ph: (03) 6434 6315

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**SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICE  
A joint Australian and State  
Government Program**

*The Royal Hobart Hospital is Tasmania's largest hospital and provides a number of state-wide services including cardiothoracic surgery, neurosurgery, burns management, hyperbaric and diving medicine, neonatal intensive care and high-risk obstetrics. It is the major teaching and research hospital for the State and works closely with the University of Tasmania.*

*Many students in the health care professions are taught within the Hospital, and gaining skills in examining and interviewing patients is an important part of their education and training. We ask for your co-operation and encourage you to participate in our teaching and research activities. Your permission is required for participation.*

The Royal Hobart Hospital encourages feedback from patients, relatives and visitors. This feedback helps staff to better understand the needs of patients and provide the best possible patient care.



**The Royal Hobart Hospital  
is a smoke-free site**

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**Information  
Pamphlet**

**Sexual  
Health  
SERVICE**

**Candidiasis  
(Thrush)**