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Oral Thrush

Oral thrush is a yeast infection that affects the mouth. It causes creamy white patches to form on the tongue or inner cheeks. These patches can be painful and may bleed. Babies with thrush are often fussy and may have trouble feeding. Thrush is seldom serious in healthy children and adults.

Risk Factors

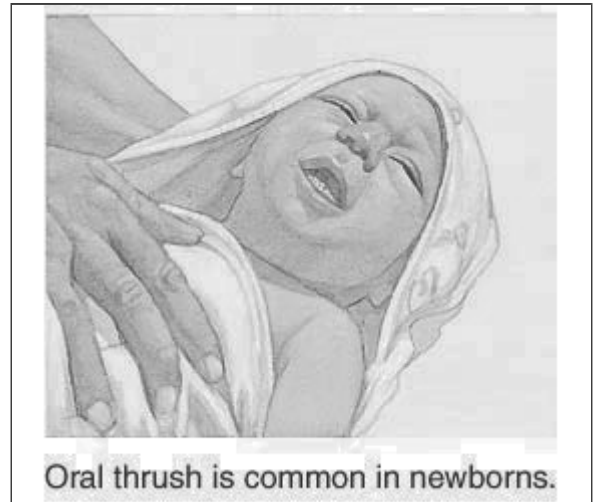
Thrush is common in infants and toddlers. Babies sometimes pass the infection to their mothers. You are also likely to develop thrush if you:

- Take antibiotics, steroid medications, or birth control pills.
- Have diabetes or HIV (the virus that causes AIDS).
- Are pregnant.
- Use oral steroid inhalers.

When to Go to the Emergency Room (ER)

In most cases, thrush isn't a medical emergency. Call your pediatrician if your baby develops symptoms of thrush.

Teens and adults should see their healthcare provider. If symptoms are severe, seek emergency care if you can't reach your doctor.



What to Expect in the ER

The affected mouth and throat will be examined. A tongue blade may be used to scrape the mouth and take a sample to check for the yeast that causes thrush. Healthy infants with mild thrush may not need any treatment. More severe cases are likely to be treated with a liquid antifungal medication. Older children and adults may receive the same medication in tablet or lozenge form.

To help prevent thrush in adults:

- Add unsweetened yogurt to your diet when taking antibiotics.
- Treat vaginal yeast infections right away.
- See your dentist every 6 to 12 months. Brush and floss as often as your dentist suggests.
- Rinse your mouth and spit after using a steroid inhaler.