

Thrush

Oropharyngeal Candidiasis/OPC

FACTSHEET

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What is Thrush?

Thrush is an infection that occurs when there is an overgrowth of fungus in the mouth or throat. The fungus that causes this infection is normally found in various parts of the body and ordinarily does not cause any symptoms. Certain conditions, such as antibiotic use or excessive moisture, can allow this overgrowth to occur.

Who gets Thrush?

People of all ages can develop thrush. Newborns and people with weakened immune systems are more frequently affected.

What are the symptoms of Thrush?

The symptoms of thrush include painless, white patches in the mouth and on the tongue. The underlying areas are usually reddened. People who develop thrush in the esophagus may have pain and difficulty swallowing.

How is Thrush spread?

Thrush is usually caused by the person's own organisms that normally live in the mouth or digestive tract. Some infants develop thrush as a result of being exposed as they pass through the birth canal. It can also be spread with direct contact with secretions of those infected.

How soon do symptoms appear?

The time between becoming infected and developing symptoms is two to five days.

Is a person with Thrush contagious?

Thrush can be transmitted through the secretions of an infected or colonized (the germ is present, but not causing any signs of infection) person.

How is Thrush treated?

Thrush can be treated with anti-fungal medications that are prescribed by your health-care professional.

Should a person with Thrush be excluded from work or school?

It is not necessary to exclude a person with thrush from work or school.

Can Thrush be prevented?

Thrush can be prevented by practicing good hygiene, such as:

- Washing your hands well and often
- Appropriately disposing of items soiled with nasal and oral secretions.

Want more information?

Information about thrush and other related health topics can be found at the website www.cdc.gov. The DC Department of Health promotes the health and safety of the District residents. For additional information, please call 202-442-5842.

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