

Thrush in pregnancy

Thrush is an inflammation of the vagina and vulva (outer parts of the genitals).

It is caused by a type of yeast called candida. You are at a higher risk of getting it during pregnancy.

Thrush is uncomfortable, but it won't cause any long term harm. It won't harm your baby either.

Symptoms of thrush

Symptoms of thrush include:

- itching and soreness of your vulva and vagina
- vaginal discharge - this is usually thick and white
- pain during sex
- stinging when you urinate
- red, cracked and inflamed skin on your vagina and vulva

Diagnosing thrush

Go to your GP if you think you have thrush.

Your GP may need to examine you. You may need a test to see if you have thrush.

Test for thrush

A cotton swab will be inserted into your vagina to collect a sample of any discharge.

Most doctors will use a speculum. A speculum is a device that is put into your vagina to open your cervix. It makes collecting a sample easier.

The sample will be sent to a lab to be tested.

This test doesn't usually hurt, but it can be uncomfortable. It won't harm your baby.

Treatment of thrush

Talk to your GP about treatment for thrush.

If you buy medicine without a prescription from your GP, always tell the pharmacist that you are pregnant.

Your GP may prescribe an anti-fungal cream. These creams are safe to use during pregnancy. Pregnant women with thrush should use the cream for at least 7 days.

Always wash your hands before and after using anti-fungal creams.

Your doctor may also prescribe a pessary. Pessaries are tablets that are inserted into your vagina.

Tablets for thrush taken by the mouth are not recommended during pregnancy.

Preventing thrush

Prevent thrush and reduce the symptoms by:

- wearing loose clothes and cotton underwear
- avoiding perfumed soaps
- never using douches or deodorants on your vagina
- washing your genitals using an emollient soap - ask your pharmacist about emollient soaps
- patting your vagina and vulva dry with a clean towel after washing
- using condoms during sex to stop the thrush spreading to your partner
- using non-perfumed panty liners or sanitary pads
- changing out of damp swimwear or sweaty sports gear as soon as possible

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