

Thrush

What is thrush?

Thrush is an infection in the mouth. It causes white, blotchy patches inside the mouth and on the tongue. The white spots cannot be washed away or wiped off. Thrush might cause mild pain for your child.



What causes it?

Thrush is caused by yeast called Candida. It is normally not easy to spread between children. However, it can be spread from one child to another if they both use the same nipple or pacifier. It can occur in both breast-fed and bottle-fed infants.

How is it treated?

- A prescription medicine is usually needed for your child. Put the medicine directly on the patches. It may be easier to “paint” the medicine on with a Q-tip®.
- Give the child medicine after eating. Do not let your child eat or drink for 30 minutes after putting the medicine on.
- Try to limit pacifier use.
- Boiling the nipples and pacifiers is a good idea but it may not kill the thrush on them. If you can, use new nipples on all bottles and get new pacifiers 2 days after the medicine is started. You may want to use only a few new nipples and pacifiers. Then, throw all nipples and pacifiers when the medicine is done.
- If you are breastfeeding, call your doctor. Your baby’s yeast infection may have infected your nipples. Signs of a yeast infection are red, sore or shiny nipples.

When it looks like all the patches are gone, use the medicine for 2 to 3 more days. This will help keep the thrush from coming back.

How can thrush be prevented?

- Always use a clean nipple and bottles with each feeding. Do not reuse milk nipples and bottles that are not washed.
- Wash pacifiers frequently with soap and hot water.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child:

- Is less than 12 weeks old and has a rectal temperature over 100.4°F (38.0°C).
- Is less than 1 year old and doesn't pee for 8 hours. This may be a sign of dehydration. Other signs include sunken eyes and no tears when crying.
- Has a rash or soreness in the diaper area.
- Has bleeding in the mouth due to thrush.
- Has patches that get worse after starting medicine.
- Has patches that last more than 10 days after starting medicine.
- Has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.