

Oral Thrush (or candidiasis)

What is an Oral Thrush?

Oral thrush is an oral fungal infection most commonly caused by the yeast *Candida albicans*, which is a normal part of the mouth's microbiome. However, under certain conditions, this fungus can multiply excessively and cause infections. Oral fungal infections can cause discomfort and affect oral health, but they are generally treatable with topical treatments.

Symptoms and Identification

Symptoms of an oral fungal infection may include:

- White or yellow patches on the oral mucosa
- Reddened areas
- A burning or stinging sensation in the mouth
- Dry mouth and changes in taste
- Cracked corners of the mouth
- Discomfort and irritation caused by dentures



Treatment and Self-Care

The goal of treating an oral thrush is to eliminate the fungus causing the infection and restore balance in the mouth. Treatment typically involves the following steps:

- **Topical Treatment:** Fungal infections are usually treated with topically applied medications as prescribed by your dentist, such as chlorhexidine mouthwash or nystatin. These help to reduce inflammation and decrease the amount of fungus in the mouth.

- **Oral Hygiene:** Teeth should be free of plaque, and gums should be inflammation-free. Brush your teeth and gumline twice daily for 2 minutes. Also, remember to clean between your teeth at least once a day.
- **Denture Hygiene:** Dentures should be thoroughly cleaned and kept out of the mouth at night to allow saliva to rinse the mucous membranes. Regular cleaning of dentures with disinfectant tablets that destroy *Candida albicans*, such as Nitradine, is recommended. Sometimes, replacing dentures or re-basing them might also be necessary.
- **Prevention:** In addition to enhanced hygiene, recurrent fungal infections can sometimes be prevented with prophylactic treatment using chlorhexidine mouthwash or nystatin as prescribed by your dentist.

Other Considerations

If you use inhaled corticosteroids for asthma treatment, be sure to rinse your throat thoroughly with water after each inhalation. This helps prevent the development of oral fungal infections.