

## Where to go

Confidential tests and treatment are available from:

(Most of these services are free. Please telephone first to see if you need an appointment.)

**Your GP or a doctor of your choice or**

### **Sexual Health Helpline**

(08) 9227 6178 or 1800 198 205 toll free  
sexhelp@fpwa.org.au

### **Fremantle Hospital**

Infectious Diseases, B2 Clinic  
FREMANTLE  
(08) 9431 2149

### **Royal Perth Hospital**

Sexual Health Clinic  
PERTH  
(08) 9224 2178

### **FPWA-Sexual Health Services**

NORTHBRIDGE  
(08) 9227 6177 or 1800 198 205 toll free

### **Quarry Health Centre (For under 25's)**

FREMANTLE  
(08) 9430 4544

### **Women's Health Services**

NORTHBRIDGE  
(09) 9227 8122 or 1800 998 399 toll free

### **Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service**

PERTH  
(08) 9421 3888

And some regional Population Health Units and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

HealthInfo 1300 135 030

[www.population.health.wa.gov.au](http://www.population.health.wa.gov.au)

### **Communicable Disease Control Directorate**

Department of Health  
(08) 9388 4999

### **Regional Population Health Units** (those in bold provide clinical services)

Albany	(08) 9842 7500
Broome	(08) 9194 1630
Bunbury	(08) 9781 2350
<b>Carnarvon</b>	<b>(08) 9941 0560</b>
<b>Geraldton</b>	<b>(08) 9956 1985</b>
<b>Kalgoorlie-Boulder</b>	<b>(08) 9080 8200</b>
Northam	(08) 9622 4320
<b>South Hedland</b>	<b>(08) 9172 8333</b>



Sexual Health and Blood-Borne Virus Program

© Department of Health 2006

HP 2805

# THRUSH

THRUSH  
THRUSH  
THRUSH  
THRUSH

Your  
sexual  
health

## What is Thrush?

Vaginal thrush (or candidiasis) is a common fungal infection. It mainly affects women, and can be irritating and painful.

Many fungi live in the vagina and rarely cause any problems. Thrush is caused when there is an overgrowth of a fungus called Candida that lives naturally in warm, moist places such as the mouth, bowel, vagina, and the foreskin of the penis.

Normally, your body and vaginal bacteria stop the overgrowth of Candida. However, if these change, the fungus can quickly multiply, leading to thrush.

## How is it spread?

You can get thrush without sexual contact, but it can be spread between partners, and sex can make it worse.

## Signs and symptoms

Symptoms of thrush vary. In women they include:

- white and cheesy-looking discharge, often thick with a yeasty smell
- stinging pain when passing urine
- pain or discomfort during sex
- itchy and swollen genitals.

Symptoms for men normally include red spots or a rash on the penis, scrotum or groin. Some uncircumcised men have Candida under the foreskin, but have no symptoms. They can still pass on Candida during sex.

## When does Thrush occur?

Thrush is more likely to occur if:

- you're pregnant
- you're taking the contraceptive pill
- you're taking medication such as antibiotics (which can kill off normal, healthy bacteria as well as disease-causing ones)
- you have undiagnosed or poorly controlled diabetes
- your immune system is suppressed (such as during chemotherapy)
- you're under a lot of stress.

It's also more common at certain times in the menstrual cycle, particularly the week before and after the period.

## Treatment and Testing

You can buy pessaries (dissolving tablets you put into the vagina) and creams from your pharmacy. Complete the treatment even if you are having a period.

If these treatments don't work or if you often get thrush, see a doctor as you may have other health problems or a drug-resistant type of Candida. The doctor will take a swab test to find out if it's thrush or something else. Your sex partners may need treatment at the same time to stop you catching it again. Men should apply the cream to the genital area, penis and, if uncircumcised, under the foreskin.

Natural yoghurt can help soothe the area but won't cure thrush.

## Helping yourself

- Wear loose pants or skirts, and cotton underwear. Tight or synthetic clothes stop air movement, providing a moist area, ideal for bacteria and fungi to grow.
- Always wash your hands after you have been to the toilet and before touching the vaginal area.
- Always wipe yourself from front to back after going to the toilet.
- Don't have vaginal sex straight after anal sex. Wash thoroughly after anal sex and use a new condom before vaginal sex.
- Wash the genital area with water only. After washing, gently wipe the area dry.
- Avoid soaps or sprays in the genital area, as they can cause irritation.
- Thrush can be passed on through sex. **Always use condoms** when having sex to avoid this and other sexually transmitted infections.

## Feelings

People who have thrush often feel embarrassed, depressed or anxious. Talk about it with your doctor, a counsellor, or others who have the same problem (try one of the listed contacts).