

How to get rid of a vaginal yeast infection

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If you're among the millions of women who experience a vaginal yeast infection each year, you know that fast relief is a top priority.

Here, experts explain what a [yeast](#) infection is and the symptoms you can expect, plus they share the best treatments for getting rid of a yeast infection quickly.

What is a yeast infection?

The [Office on Women's Health](#) (OWH) states that [yeast infections](#) are caused by too much growth of yeast, which is a type of fungus. The yeast that causes vaginal yeast infections is called Candida.

About 75% of women and girls will have a yeast infection at some point in their lives, and they usually occur between puberty and menopause.

"If you're sick and need antibiotics, the drugs can kill [healthy bacteria](#), allowing yeast to thrive," Dr. Matthew Goldman said recently in a Cleveland Clinic [article](#).

The OWH notes that several other factors can also increase your risk of developing a vaginal yeast infection, including:

- Douching
- Pregnancy
- Diabetes with uncontrolled blood sugar
- Sexual intercourse with a partner who has a yeast infection
- Tampons, pads and panty liners left unchanged too long
- Birth control pills with higher levels of estrogen
- Using scented hygiene products
- Immersion in very hot water, such as hot tubs and bathtubs
- Weakened immunity

Goldman noted that "not showering after a workout, or wearing tight-fitting clothing that holds moisture close to the body can lead to a yeast infection" as well.

Yeast infection symptoms

According to the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), the symptoms of a yeast infection are usually mild. You may experience:

- Vaginal discharge
- Vaginal itching and soreness
- Pain during urination and [sexual intercourse](#)

If your [vaginal yeast infection](#) is more severe, you might also notice vaginal swelling, redness and even cracking of your vaginal walls.

"The biggest issue is that self-diagnosis of yeast infections is not very accurate, especially if you haven't had one before," Cleveland Clinic ob/gyn Dr. Kathryn Goebel said in a recent [article](#).

Goebel explained that it's best to contact your [health care provider](#) for a diagnosis if you notice these symptoms, especially since other types of infections may have similar ones.

Yeast infection treatments

Medications

When figuring out how to get rid of a yeast infection, Goebel said that yeast infection medication should be your first line of defense against the Candida fungus.

She explained that your doctor can prescribe an antifungal medication called fluconazole (Diflucan), which is a pill that often clears up your infection after one dose.

An over-the-counter cream called miconazole (Monistat) is also available in one-, three- or seven-day dosages, and it is particularly good at helping with vaginal itching.

If you are having recurring yeast infections or one that won't clear up, the OWH says a doctor may prescribe [antifungal medication](#) for as long as six months.

Home remedies

What about do-it-yourself home remedies like vinegar baths, coconut oil suppositories, or yogurt and garlic rubs?

"Most of it doesn't work, and a lot of it will cause problems," Goebel advised.

In fact, certain DIY treatments may even do more harm than good. For instance, she explained that "old-fashioned vinegar douches disrupt natural healthy bacteria and increase the risk of infections."

Goldman advised that, to be sure that you are receiving the [best treatment](#) for a yeast infection, make an appointment with your doctor once you notice symptoms.

"Untreated yeast infections can last for months. In rare instances, a [yeast infection](#) can seep into your bloodstream and cause a life-threatening infection like sepsis," he explained. "With [proper treatment](#), yeast infections clear up within a few days or weeks."

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