



## 1. Background

Yeast (*Candida*) is a naturally occurring organism found in/on the human body. It becomes a problem when this one-cell organism overgrows in/on the body. Yeast grows best in the warm, moist area of the mouth, vaginal tract, diaper area, nipples, or milk ducts.

## 2. Symptoms

Your infant may or may not have white patches of yeast on the tongue, cheeks, or lips. Your nipples may look pink or red, but most likely will look normal. The most common symptom is a severe pain (burning, shooting) that lasts during and after the breastfeeding session. You may have just finished taking antibiotics, your infant may have a diaper rash (yeast), or you may have a vaginal yeast infection.

## 3. Treatment (medicine)

Yeast is a tough organism to control. You and your infant may both need to be treated. First, call your doctor. You will be given a topical medicine for your nipple area. This antifungal (anti-yeast) cream will soak into the breast tissue and does not need to be washed off before breastfeeding. You may feel relief after 48 hours of using the cream; however, keep using the cream for the full 14 days, as the yeast can easily overgrow again. Once in a while an oral medicine is needed to treat yeast. The infant's mouth may need to be treated with a liquid several times a day.

## 4. Treatment (other than medicine)

Good hand-washing is needed to reduce the spread of yeast. A clean bra each day and new pads (if the pads are damp) each feeding is needed. Breast shells can be worn inside the bra to keep clothing off sore nipples and to let air circulate. Wash the infant's hands often. Pacifiers, breast shells, and breast pumping equipment needs to be washed with each use and boiled for 20 minutes (or steamed cleaned) each day to kill any yeast. Towels and clothing should be washed in the hottest water possible. Freezing does not kill yeast, so any breastmilk pumped during this time should be used as soon as possible. Remember that yeast takes two weeks to control, and treatment is needed during that entire time. It is common for the yeast to return in some infants. This is because their immune system has not matured yet. Eventually, infants will outgrow reoccurring yeast.