

What is thrush?

Thrush is a common illness in the mouth of babies and toddlers caused by the fungus *Candida*. It is not usually associated with other diseases. Adults may also get thrush. It is seen more often in adults who have diabetes, HIV/AIDS or who have weak immune systems and who have taken antibiotics.

How do you get thrush?

Thrush can be spread:

- Infant to infant, when they share objects like toys or pacifiers that have been in each other's mouths.
- Mother to infant during a vaginal birth or during breastfeeding.
- Caretakers to others who do not use proper hand washing techniques.

How can I tell if my baby has thrush?

Baby will have:

- White or yellow patches that may cover all or part of the tongue, lips and walls of the mouth.
- Flaky or creamy patches that do not wipe off easily.
- Red areas, which may be painful and bleed.

How is thrush diagnosed?

Thrush is usually diagnosed by observation. Sometimes the medical provider may examine the white patches by looking at a sample of the patches under a microscope.

How is thrush treated?

Your health care provider may prescribe an antifungal medicine for your baby.

Important Points:

- Feed your child **before** giving medicine. Do not feed your child for at least 10 to 15 minutes after applying the medicine.
- Throw away bottle nipples and buy new ones when child's mouth begins to clear. Fungus can get into the nipples and cannot be easily removed.
- If breastfeeding, clean the nipple and breast after each feeding to help prevent thrush. If your child does develop thrush, you may need to apply an antifungal cream to your breast. Ask your health care provider to prescribe the medicine you need.

Can my child still attend child care?

Yes. Exclusion from child care is not necessary as long as the child with thrush is comfortable.

Call your child's health care provider if:

- Your child is not better after seven days.
- Thrush is still present after all the medicine has been used.
- Your child develops a diaper rash along with thrush.
- Your child is having trouble feeding (does not suck well).

For more information call the Guilford County Department of Public Health at 641-7777 or visit www.guilfordhealth.org