

Thrush

Thrush (candidiasis) is an overgrowth of yeast on the nipples of a breastfeeding mother and/or in the mouth of a breastfeeding baby. This yeast is a fungus that is part of the normal flora that lives on our bodies; however, it can occasionally overgrow during breastfeeding. Thrush can cause a burning sensation in the nipples, shooting breast pains, and/or white patches in the baby's mouth. Thrush is contagious and easily passed back-and-forth between breastfeeding mothers and their babies.

Treatment

We recommend that you continue treatment for 7 additional days once the symptoms stop (to prevent a re-flare). Treatment will depend on the severity of symptoms and length of infection.

Your IBCLC will determine the best treatment.

Washing & Cleaning

- Sterilize any pump parts, bottles, pacifiers, etc. after use. Try Medela quick clean bags or use the sanitizing setting on your dishwasher to save time.
- Apply clean, dry nursing pads after each breastfeeding session.
- Wash nursing bras, breast pads, burp clothes, bibs, blankets, towels, sheets, baby clothes (anything that gets wet from breast milk or spit up) in very hot water ($\geq 122^{\circ}$ F).

Tips

- Air out your nipples and (if possible) allow them to be in sunlight (this can be through a window).
**If air on your nipples worsens your symptoms, reach out!*
- A daily probiotic and/or certain fermented foods (yogurt, kombucha, sauerkraut) could help prevent thrush.
- Limiting dietary sugar, grains, dairy, and alcohol could also help prevent thrush.

Pumping

While you and your baby are being treated for thrush, you can feed any milk you are currently expressing or pumping. It is NOT recommended that you pump to store milk during your treatment. If you want to freeze any milk you are pumping while you are being treated for thrush, be sure to mark that milk with a 'T' for thrush or "Y" for yeast. Don't feed this milk to your baby once you are finished with your treatment as freezing does not destroy yeast (this milk could cause a re-infection). You can save it in the event there is a future case of thrush that requires treatment.

Follow Up Care

Contact Your IBCLC if:

- After 3–5 days of treatment, your symptoms are the same (or worse).
- If symptoms have not stopped by 7–10 days of treatment.
- You develop thrush more than once while breastfeeding.
- You are prone to yeast infections and are breastfeeding or planning to breastfeed.

Lactation at The Birth Center

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