

# About Oral Thrush

(an infection of fungus in the mouth)



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## What is thrush?

Thrush is an infection caused by a yeast fungus called *Candida albicans*. When this fungus grows in a person's mouth, it is called oral thrush. This fungus can also cause diaper rash in babies and vaginal thrush in women. Babies, specially those who are bottle-fed, sometimes get oral thrush.



## How does a child get thrush?

Many people already have this yeast fungus in their mouths. As long as this fungus stays in balance with the other germs in the mouth it doesn't cause problems.

Some things that can cause the fungus to get out of balance are:



- Taking antibiotics.
- Not rinsing out the mouth after using an inhaler.
- A mother with a yeast infection may give it to her baby.



## How will I know if my child has thrush?

A child with thrush will have white, cream-colored or yellow spots in the mouth. These spots are slightly raised, and will not rub off with a cloth. They may hurt.

## How is thrush treated?

First, the cause of the thrush needs to be taken care of. Then, your health care provider may have your child take a medicine that fights fungus. Usually, this is a lozenge (like hard candy) that your child should suck, or thick liquid, such as Nystatin, that your child should swish around (gargle) in the mouth



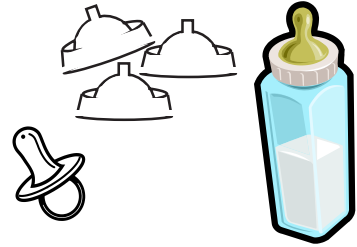
for as long as possible before swallowing. Your health care provider may have you use Gentian Violet 1%, which you can buy without a prescription. Sometimes, pills or shots may be needed.



(over)

## What can I do to help my baby?

- If you are bottle-feeding your baby who has thrush, be sure to carefully sterilize all bottles, nipples and pacifiers in boiling water. You may need to buy new nipples.



- If you are breast-feeding your baby who has thrush, your health care provider may have you use a cream which has a medicine that fights fungus in it. This cream should be put on your nipples so your baby doesn't keep getting the fungus. Wash this cream off before you breast-feed the baby.



- If you (the baby's mother) have a yeast infection, it is very important for you to wash your hands well with soap and water before feeding or touching your baby.



- If your baby has thrush, it is OK if your other children touch the baby's head and feet but **not the baby's mouth or hands**. They should also wash their hands well each time after they play with the baby. This will help stop the spread of the fungus.

