

What it is

Candida albicans is a yeast-like fungus that lives in our gut. In a healthy person it is not a problem as it is kept under control by 'friendly bacteria' or 'pro-biotics.' Recently it has become more of a problem for many people. Diet, drug consumption and stress levels all play a part in determining the amount of yeast in our system.

The symptoms

Apart from thrush, other symptoms and related conditions include: athlete's foot; migraine type headaches; fatigue; constipation; bloating; allergy; sensitivity to strong smells; poor memory; feelings of unreality; irritability; difficulty in concentrating; depression; numbness; tingling and weak muscles; heartburn; abdominal pain; diarrhoea; and recurrent sore throats.

If you experience any of these symptoms and they become worse after eating sugary or yeast rich foods then it is possible that you are suffering from candida. Symptoms also tend to get worse in damp or mouldy environments.

How to control it

It is impossible to eliminate all of the candida yeast from your body, but it is possible to return it to a level at which it ceases to cause problems by:

- reducing the intake of certain drugs
- allowing time for stress reduction and relaxation
- minimising intake of sugar, yeast and mouldy or fermented foods.
- avoiding foods that have mould on them including blue cheeses.

Useful tips

- Carrots, beetroots and parsnips can help to reduce sugar cravings.
- The following grains help to inhibit Candida growth: millet, roasted buckwheat (kasha), rye, oats, barley, amaranth, and quinoa. Grains should be chewed thoroughly.
- Green (chlorophyll rich) foods are purifying and help to promote growth of beneficial bacteria. These include parsley, spinach, dandelion, nettle, chard and watercress.
- Sprouted beans and grains are very beneficial; also
 - aduki beans and mung beans
 - apple cider vinegar;
 - garlic (one clove, twice a day or take garlic capsules)
 - cabbage
 - acidophilus yoghurt made with goat's milk (or cow's milk if you don't like the taste of goat's milk).
- Herbs can be used as gentle anti-fungals and prebiotics.
- B vitamins are vital if symptoms are associated with stress.
- Anti-oxidants will help support the body to detoxify the toxic substances released by the candida organisms. These should contain Vitamins A, C and zinc and selenium.
- Omega-3 rich Essential Fatty Acids such as flaxseed oil can help reduce inflammation.
- For non-vegetarians: try to eat organic meat and non farmed fish containing no anti-biotics or pesticides.

FOODS TO AVOID	FOODS TO TRY INSTEAD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REFINED SUGAR (sucrose and glucose) and all foods containing it. This includes all sweets and puddings, cakes, biscuits, soft drinks, tinned fruit in syrup etc. brown or white sugar, demerara, molasses, syrup, honey and malt. Check prepared food for hidden sugar - it's even in some frozen or tinned vegetables. • SOME MEDICINES: Beechams powders and many painkillers eg: anadin, phensic and panadol extra contain sugar. • REFINED GRAINS: White flour, granary flour (which is white flour with added malt and whole grains), white rice, white pasta, cornflour (cornstarch), custard powder, cornflakes, any cereals not labelled "whole grain" or "wholemeal". • YEAST and all foods containing or derived from it: bread, food coated in breadcrumbs or rusk, Marmite, Vecon, Bovril, Bisto, Oxo, monosodium glutamate, vitamin tablets (unless the label specifically states "yeast free"), pizza bases and most makes of pitta and naan breads. • MALTED PRODUCTS: some cereals eg: Weetabix, some crispbreads, granary bread, malted drinks like Ovaltine, Horlicks and Caro. • ANYTHING FERMENTED: Vinegar (except cider vinegar) and foods containing it, such as ketchups, pickles, salad creams, mayonnaise, baked beans, soy sauce, sourdough bread, ginger beer, cider, beer and wine. • SMOKED or CURED FISH and MEAT including smoked salmon, smoked mackerel, smoked haddock, ham, bacon, (even unsmoked bacon is cured). • MUSHROOMS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YEAST-FREE SODA BREAD made with wholewheat flour, or other whole grains. • RICE CAKES, • OATCAKES (malt free), • RYVITA, • WHOLEWHEAT CRISPBREADS. • PASTRY made with wholewheat flour and/or oatmeal. • CEREALS such as muesli with oat flakes and other whole grains and seeds. Shredded wheat, puffed oats or wheat, porridge. • FISH (not smoked). Oily fish is particularly beneficial: herrings, sardines, mackerel, pilchards, salmon tuna and trout. • YEAST-FREE STOCK CUBES • HOT DRINKS: barley cup, dandelion coffee, redbush tea, herb teas or fruit teas. • COLD DRINKS: water, tomato juice, iced fruit teas, tomato juice, pure fruit juice, smoothies. • ALCOHOLIC DRINKS: Good whisky, gin and vodka are probably all right, as long as they aren't taken with sugary or fermented mixers.
<p>Note One of the symptoms of Candida infection is a craving for these foods, particularly sugar.</p>	