



Oral Thrush

Patient information leaflet



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Common Ailments Service

Only use this leaflet if your pharmacist has advised you about your or your child's condition.

Oral thrush is an infection inside the mouth. It is caused by a yeast (fungus) called Candida. In small numbers, Candida is harmless and commonly lives on the skin and in the mouth. Certain situations or conditions may lead to an increase in the numbers of Candida, which can cause oral thrush.

Oral thrush makes the mouth red inside and there are sometimes white patches. If you wipe off a patch, there may be a red area underneath that can bleed. The mouth may feel sore inside, and at the corners of the lips. It may be uncomfortable to eat and drink. There may be an unpleasant taste or things may not taste as they usually do.

Oral thrush is common in older people with dentures and in babies. Babies with oral thrush may not feed properly. They may also have nappy rash. Babies can pass oral thrush on to the mother's nipple through breastfeeding.

You are more likely to get oral thrush if you:

- are taking antibiotics
- use too much antibacterial mouthwash
- take steroids (inhaled or by mouth)
- wear dentures (false teeth), particularly if they do not fit properly
- do not look after your teeth
- have a dry mouth (either because of a medical condition or a medicine you're taking)
- smoke
- have a weakened immune system, for example from cancer treatment or steroid therapy
- have diabetes
- are frail, generally ill, or your body lacks iron, folate or vitamin B12



Treatment and Prevention

Medicines that can help

These medicines are not suitable for everyone. Make sure you have asked your pharmacist for advice about what treatment is best for you or your child.

Your pharmacist may suggest antifungal medicines such as **miconazole oral gel** or **nystatin liquid**. These kill the Candida yeast that causes thrush.

Ideally, you should not eat or drink for about 30 minutes after using the medicine. This helps to prevent it from being washed out of your mouth and gives it time to work.

Always read the patient information leaflet that comes with your medicine.

If you are concerned about any side effects from a treatment, report it to a doctor, nurse or pharmacist. You can also report side effects on the Yellow Card [app](#) or [website](#).



Treatment and Prevention

Prevention

To **stop oral thrush coming back**:

- brush your teeth twice a day and go for regular check-ups
- if you do not have any teeth, brush your gums and tongue with a soft toothbrush
- rinse your mouth after eating or taking medicine
- if you smoke, consider giving up – [free NHS help is available](#)
- sterilise babies' dummies and bottles
- if you have diabetes, try to control your blood sugar level well
- take frequent sips of water if you are taking a medicine or have a medical condition that causes you to have a dry mouth

If you **wear dentures**:

- take them out overnight, or for at least 6 hours every day
- clean and disinfect them daily
- see your dentist if the dentures do not fit well

If you use a **steroid inhaler**:

- use a spacer device
- rinse out your mouth with water after using it
- ask your pharmacist, practice nurse or doctor for advice on using your inhaler or spacer device correctly, and to check that the dose of your steroid inhaler is right for you

If your child is too young to rinse out their mouth and uses a steroid inhaler, clean their teeth instead.



When to Get Help

Contact your GP if:

- you do not see any improvement after 1 week of treatment or you start to feel unwell
- you have a weakened immune system, for example from cancer treatment or steroid therapy
- you have difficulty or pain swallowing
- you have diabetes – make an appointment to see your GP within 7 days
- you are breastfeeding and your baby has oral thrush and your nipples change colour, crack or are painful

Urgently contact your GP or dentist if:

- you have only one red, or red and white, patch in your mouth, and it will not rub off

If you are worried that your or your child's condition is not getting better, or is getting worse, talk to your GP.



More information

For more information on oral thrush or a medicine, talk to your pharmacist or look at the following websites:

NHS: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/oral-thrush-mouth-thrush/>

Patient UK: <https://patient.info/infections/fungal-infections/oral-thrush-yeast-infection>

Medicines A-Z: <https://www.nhs.uk/medicines/>

Information from the above resources is included in this leaflet.



Mae'r daflen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This leaflet is also available in Welsh.

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