



Breastfeeding Committee
for Saskatchewan

www.thebcs.ca

Important:

Signs of Thrush:

- You have burning pain in the breast during and *after* feeds.
- White patches are seen in baby's mouth that do not wipe off.
- See your doctor for treatment of **both** you and baby.
- Treatment usually takes 2 weeks.

For further information contact:

Local Public Health Nurse

International Board Certified
Lactation Consultant (IBCLC)

Local breastfeeding support
Group

Saskatchewan HealthLine 811

THRUSH

What is thrush?

- Candida albicans (also known as thrush) is a one-celled organism that can cause thrush and vaginal yeast infections. It is a fungus that normally lives in our bodies in balance with other organisms but illness, pregnancy, antibiotic use, or other factors that throw the body out of balance can cause an unhealthy overgrowth.*

Possible signs and symptoms in mom are:

- sudden onset of sore nipples
- cracked or sore nipples that don't heal
- flaky, itchy, red or burning nipples; the areola can also be affected
- deep shooting or burning pain in breast **during and/or after** feeds
- vaginal yeast infection

Possible signs and symptoms in baby:

- fussy at the breast or refusing breast
- Baby gassy after every feed
- white patches on inside of mouth, cheeks or tongue that do not wipe off with a cloth
- diaper rash that does not improve after using diaper cream for 2 to 3 days
- the baby may have **no** symptoms

Treatment

- If you feel that you or your baby has thrush, you should seek treatment from your doctor. It is important that both you and your baby are treated at the same time.
- It is important to finish all of the medication. Common treatment can include prescribed medications such as Nystatin, Miconazole, Flyconazole, Viaderm, and All Purpose Nipple Ointment (APNO). Over the counter/non prescribed treatments include Grapefruit Seed Extract (GSE), and probiotics (acidophilus with bifidus).
- Treatment usually takes approximately 2 weeks. Thrush may come back if treatment is stopped too soon and you may experience more than one thrush infection when breastfeeding.

NOTE: Gentian Violet is no longer recommended as a treatment for thrush since a new Health Canada warning was released June 2019.



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What you can do:

- Continue breastfeeding.
- Wash your hands often, especially after changing baby's diaper & after using bathroom.
- Throw out disposable nursing pads when they become wet. If using cloth nursing pads, change them after every feeding and wash in hot, soapy water.
- If using a breast pump, boil all parts, as recommended by the manufacturer, daily.
- You do not need to throw away any breastmilk that was collected during the time you had a thrush (*Candida albicans*) infection. Freezing does not kill thrush, so it is recommended that the milk expressed during a breakout be used during the breakout. Breastmilk has antifungal properties that help protect another infection from occurring.
- Wash any toys that have been in the baby's mouth in hot, soapy water and rinse well.
- If using soothers or bottle nipples, they need to be boiled once daily for 20 minutes. After 1 week of treatment throw soothers and bottle nipples out and use new ones.
- If thrush continues to come back, **all** members of the family may need to be treated.

References:

1. Government of Canada, Health Canada. (2019, June 17). Health Canada warns Canadians of potential cancer risk associated with gentian violet. Retrieved from <http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/recall-alert-rappel-avis/hc-sc/2019/70179a-eng.php>
2. Mohrbacher, N. "Breastfeeding Answers Made Simple", Hale Publishing. 2010, pg 652-655.*
3. Newman, J. & Kenerman, E. Candida protocol. Breastfeeding Inc.