Yeast Vaginitis

What It Is
Yeast vaginitis is an overgrowth of the yeast (fungi) which are normally present in the vagina and rectum. It can cause soreness of the walls inside the vagina, the outer lips of the vagina, and sometimes involves the skin between the vagina and rectum and on the thighs and buttocks. Yeast can also grow in the mouth, on the tongue, and inside of the cheeks (called “thrush”).

How It Happens
Almost every woman will have yeast vaginitis at some time in her life. It is not usually sexually transmitted, yet can be present along with a sexually transmitted disease (STD).

Yeast vaginitis may be caused by:

1. Taking antibiotics or steroids
2. Illnesses that lower your immunity such as diabetes or HIV/AIDS.
3. Pregnancy
4. Poor diet, lack of sleep, poor general health
5. Tight or irritating clothing (pantyhose, nylon underwear, damp bathing suits, exercise clothing).
6. Unknown reasons.

How It Is Identified
Symptoms of yeast vaginitis may be vaginal itching, increased discharge, burning with urination or discomfort with sex. An exam by a clinician is necessary to definitely diagnose this condition. The clinician may see redness and swelling of vaginal tissue with a cottage cheese-like discharge in the vagina.

The clinician will do a wet smear and examine the discharge under the microscope.

How It Is Treated
Vaginal cream or suppositories are used for 3 to 7 days. Follow the exact instructions of your clinician. Be sure to finish all of the medication even if your symptoms improve.

Sitting in lukewarm water in the bathtub may help relieve itching and irritation. After bathing, dry the vaginal area with a hair dryer on a low setting.

WAIT TO HAVE SEX UNTIL YOU HAVE USED ALL THE MEDICINE AND THE VAGINAL AREA IS HEALED.

With recurrent or difficult-to-treat infections, HIV or blood sugar testing may be recommended.

How It Can Be Prevented
1. Avoid tight clothing. Change out of bathing suits and exercise clothing after use.
2. Wear cotton crotch underwear and avoid wearing thongs on a daily basis.
3. Wipe from front to back after using the toilet.
4. Do not use vaginal sprays, “deodorant” tampons or pads, bubble baths, douches, or deodorant soap in the vaginal area.
5. Reduce the amount of sugars and starches in your diet. Increase your water intake.