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Getting rid of a yeast infection ^[1]

Dear Alice,

How can I get rid of a vaginal yeast infection?

— Cheesy

Answer

Dear Cheesy,

Yeast and other vaginal infections can cause a great deal of discomfort so it's no wonder you are itching to get rid of it! The first step in treating a vaginal yeast infection is having an accurate diagnosis. Other vaginal infections, such as [bacterial vaginosis](#) ^[2] or some sexually transmitted infections have similar symptoms and, if treated with over-the-counter antifungal medicines, can cause a resistant infection. If you've had yeast infections before, you can probably recognize the symptoms, but if an infection has been recurrent, a self-diagnosis might be incorrect.

After seeing a health care provider and confirming a yeast infection, several treatment options are available. Over-the-counter treatments come in one to three day regimens, and most consist of an antifungal cream or suppository and an anti-itch substance. The cream or suppository is inserted into the vagina and the anti-itch medication is spread around the vulva to reduce itching and irritation. The anti-itch creams do not actually treat the infection, but help reduce discomfort.

For more severe infection, health care providers can prescribe an antifungal medication, which is taken once by mouth. While there is not enough research to determine their effectiveness, some women swear by "natural" remedies for yeast infection treatment, which includes eating plain, live acidophilus culture yogurt or taking acidophilus capsules to help restore the balance of yeast and bacteria in the body.

Certain circumstances can cause recurrent yeast infections, including pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, the use of oral contraceptives, or possibly passing the infection back and forth between partners. In the last case, both partners will need to be treated. Your health care provider can determine the underlying cause(s) of your yeast infection(s) that might affect your course of treatment.

Here's to some relief,

Alice!

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