

## CHRONIC CANDIDA (YEAST SYNDROME)

Chronic candidiasis (yeast overgrowth) is a common North American condition, most typical in females between the ages of 15 and 40. *Candida albicans* is normally a benign yeast that resides in the warm crevices of the digestive tract and the vaginal tract. However, when conditions in the body allow this yeast to overgrow, the yeast cells and various toxic byproducts of yeast metabolism can enter the general circulation and significantly disrupt body processes. The risk of yeast overgrowth increases with high numbers of prescription antibiotics, birth control pills, high levels of sugar in the diet, high alcohol consumption, diabetes, high stress, and immune suppression (AIDS, immunosuppressive drugs, history of frequent colds, cold sores).

Virtually any system of the body can be affected by Candida overgrowth. You may just feel “sick all over”. Chronic fatigue and lethargy, headaches, lack of concentration, feeling “spacy” or “unreal”, cravings for sugar and breads, abdominal pain, belching and gas, heartburn, irritable bowel syndrome, persistent vaginal itch or burning, vaginal yeast infections, frequent bladder infections, depression, poor memory, allergies, eczema, and fungal skin infections, are amongst the most common symptoms people may experience. Tests for chronic candida involve blood and stool tests which can be done by your naturopathic doctor. Medical doctors will test for local candida yeast infections (vaginal swabs) but do not generally test for systemic chronic candida in the bloodstream or stools.

Naturopathic treatment of chronic candida involves the elimination of refined and simple sugars from the diet. Sugar is the chief nutrient for *Candida albicans*, so it needs to be starved of this nutrient in order to die off. Sugar may appear on labels as fructose, maltose, dextrose, polydextrose, corn syrup, molasses, sorbitol, maltodextrin, honey, and maple syrup. Fruit juices should also be avoided since they contain concentrated fruit sugars. Alcohol also needs to be avoided as it damages the liver, raises blood sugar levels, and increases intestinal permeability (damage to the intestine allowing particles of candida access to the rest of the body through the bloodstream). Also, food allergies and sensitivities need to be assessed in order to remove offending foods from the diet in order to allow the gut to heal.

The key nutritional supplements to combat *Candida albicans* are probiotics (*Lactobacillus acidophilus* and *Bifidobacterium bifidum*). These are healthy gut bacteria which out-compete Candida yeast, as well as fungus, parasites, and other evil critters that can reside in the gut. Probiotics are destroyed by antibiotics, leaving you more susceptible to yeast overgrowth. Therefore, it is very important whenever you go on antibiotics to take a round of acidophilus during and after to prevent these good bacteria from being destroyed and to prevent subsequent yeast overgrowth. The dosage and form of probiotics is also important; whereas many over-the-counter varieties contain only 1 billion inactive, inert bacteria, the refrigerated, human, live microflora varieties containing 5-6 billion bacteria are the most effective and are carried by naturopathic doctors.

Dr. Jeannie Doig, HBSc, ND  
Naturopathic Physician

[www.drjeannedoig.com](http://www.drjeannedoig.com)  
Port Alberni (250) 723-9888  
Tofino & Ucluelet (250) 522-0033

I recommend other vitamins and nutrients according to each individual case. Immune system support, fiber, liver support, and stress reduction techniques are commonly prescribed.

Start feeling better and get to the bottom of your health concerns by seeing a naturopathic doctor and getting tested for *Candida albicans*.