

Patient information from BMJ

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Oral thrush: how to reduce your risk

Oral thrush is an infection some people get in their mouth and throat. It's caused by a fungus called Candida. Thrush can make your mouth sore, but it can usually be easily treated with medicines.

There are also things you can do to reduce your chances of getting oral thrush again.

- If you smoke, the best thing to do is to stop. You can have treatment to help you stop smoking. Your doctor or pharmacist can provide advice.
- If you have a dry mouth, your doctor may recommend treatments to add moisture. These might include special chewing gum or mouth wash, or artificial saliva.
- If you wear dentures, always keep your dentures clean, especially the surface that's in contact with the roof of your mouth. This is because Candida can grow on dentures. Also, leave your dentures out at night.
- If you have diabetes, keeping your blood sugar under control can reduce your chance of oral thrush. This means regularly testing your blood sugar level (or getting it tested), taking your diabetes medicine correctly, and following the advice of your doctor.
- If you have asthma and take corticosteroids through an inhaler, the medicine can sometimes cause oral thrush. You can reduce the chance of this happening by rinsing your mouth out after using the inhaler, and ensuring a good inhaler technique. It may also help to use a spacing device. This device makes it easier to inhale without too much of the medicine touching your mouth and throat.
- If you developed oral thrush after taking antibiotics, be sure to tell your doctor if you need antibiotics again. Your doctor may be able to prescribe an antibiotic that is less likely to increase your chance of oral thrush.
- If your immune system is weakened (for example, if you have HIV, or are receiving radiation or chemotherapy for cancer), your doctor can provide advice about managing your condition and helping to prevent oral thrush.

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