



Oral Thrush

You have been given this leaflet because you have asked for oral thrush treatment that you can get “over the counter” (OTC) from pharmacies. After a local and national public consultation on OTC medicines, we do not prescribe simple oral thrush treatment anymore.

Oral thrush is usually harmless. It's common in babies and older people with dentures. It can be easily treated without the need to visit a GP.

Symptoms in Adults

- mouth is red inside with white patches
- cracks at the corners of the mouth
- lack of or unpleasant taste
- pain in the mouth e.g. sore tongue or gums
- difficulty eating and drinking

Symptoms in Babies

- a white coating on the tongue—which can't be rubbed off easily
- they don't want to feed
- nappy rash

N.B. If you baby is less than 4 months old seek advice from your GP

Oral thrush in adults isn't contagious; however babies can pass oral thrush on through breastfeeding.

How can I avoid triggers/ suggested lifestyle changes

Thrush is an infection caused by a fungus called Candida. Some things can make the fungus grow more than usual. You might get thrush if you are: taking long term antibiotics, using steroid inhalers, have diabetes or whilst having chemotherapy.

Do

- brush teeth twice a day, clean your dentures, go for regular check-ups even if you have dentures
- brush your gums and tongue with a soft toothbrush (if you don't have any teeth)
- sterilise dummies and bottles regularly
- rinse mouth after eating or medication
- go to regular check-ups if you have a long-term condition like diabetes

Don't

- wear your dentures at night
- keep wearing dentures if they don't fit properly – see your dentist
- smoke

How do I treat?

Treatments can be bought from pharmacies allowing you to treat at home without having to visit the doctor.

- **Locally applied treatment** –an antifungal oral gel (miconazole 2%) for at least 7 days.
 - Always follow the instructions that come with the medicine
 - Ideally, you should not eat or drink for about 30 minutes after using the gel. This helps to prevent the medicine from being washed out of your mouth too soon.
- **Speak to your pharmacist** - for advice if you're not sure which type of medicine is best for you/ your baby.

When should I seek advice?

If left untreated, the symptoms will often persist and your mouth will continue to feel uncomfortable. If your symptoms continue - see your GP.

- In severe cases that are left untreated, there is also a risk of the infection spreading further into your body. This can be serious.
- If you suffer from oral thrush frequently the GP may recommend blood tests. The tests will look for certain conditions linked to oral thrush, such as diabetes and nutritional deficiencies.

For more information

- Visit your local pharmacy for advice

Be self-care aware

Find out more about self-care at www.nhs.uk