

ST JOHNS HEALTH CENTER

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Yeast

A growing fear of yeast has developed particularly since the 1980s when a general “yeast syndrome” began to be popularized. Yeast in the body, primarily *Candida albicans*, are believed to overgrow in areas where they normally live and then spread beyond these areas to other areas of the body. The symptoms of this syndrome are varied, vague, and almost universal (applying to virtually anyone with an ailment).

According to the theory, yeast overgrowth leads to suppression of the immune system and development of numerous health problems. However, evidence indicates that the opposite is true. Persons who have a severely depressed immune system may develop an overgrowth or spread of *Candida*. Refined carbohydrates (sugary foods, most breads and bakery items) and foods made with yeast or containing fungi (cheese, mushrooms, bakery goods, vinegar, alcoholic beverages, etc.) are thought to “feed” or stimulate the yeast, so people are advised to avoid them. Fruit may be forbidden due to its natural sugars. But yeast DOES NOT feed on yeast. And natural sugars and starches in whole foods do not instigate yeast “infections” in the body.

Candida organisms are ordinarily harmless denizens of the digestive tract, mouth, skin, and genitourinary tract. But when a person’s bodily defenses are diminished, the fungi can spread into the bloodstream, which carries them into the brain, heart, kidneys, eyes, and other tissues. Normally, bacteria in the intestinal tract and elsewhere keep *Candida* in balance. But a drastic reduction of the normal bacteria can result in yeast overgrowth. A healthy immune system keeps any spreading *Candida* in check---white blood cells such as neutrophils, monocytes, and lymphocytes engulf and break down the yeast and buds; other mechanisms handle disposal. But various illnesses, medications, or procedures that compromise the immune system prevent the usual deterrents of spread, and *Candida* ends up in places where it does not belong or it grows excessively in places where it does belong.

Candidiasis is truly a modern disease. Almost always, a combination of MANY factors contribute to chronic Candidiasis, including any of the following: use of antibiotics, chemotherapy, corticosteroids, hormone replacement therapy, oral contraceptives, or other immuno-suppressive drugs; nutritional deficiencies; food allergies or intolerances; excessive stress; a diet high in refined and denatured or toxin-laden foods; excessive consumption of commercial meats containing antibiotic and hormone residues; high exposure to toxic chemicals; metal toxicity (including mercury); impaired immunity; impaired endocrine function (adrenal, thyroid, thymus, etc.); impaired liver function; decreased digestive secretions; altered bowel flora; and some underlying disease states. Most important, there is a depressed immune system.

Find out how to effectively “boost up” an immune system that has been compromised for whatever the reason.