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## CANDIDIASIS

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### What is candidiasis and why does it develop?

Candidiasis is a superficial infection of the skin caused by a yeast called *Candida albicans*. This yeast does not normally live on the skin and will not survive on normal dry skin. However, in warm, moist body folds – especially in the armpits, groin, and under the breasts – the infection may develop. Most people with candidiasis have a predisposing factor such as pregnancy, obesity, recent antibiotic therapy, chronic illness, or diabetes.

Candidiasis can occur at any age in both men and women. It is not contagious.

### What are the symptoms?

- The rash is bright red and varies from dry and flaky to moist and oozing.
- Itching and burning are common.

### How is it treated?

- If the skin is weeping:
  - Apply a cold water compress (use a clean washcloth soaked in cold tap water).
  - Leave the compress on for 10-15 minutes.
  - Use the compress twice daily until the rash is gone.
- Topical creams:
  - Buy miconazole or clotrimazole cream (available without a prescription).
  - Apply a thin layer of the cream twice daily – if you are using a cold water compress, apply the cream after the compress; otherwise, just apply the cream to the rash area.
  - The rash usually disappears after 2 to 3 weeks of treatment. Keep using the cream for another 7 days after the rash is gone.

### What can I do to prevent candidiasis?

Since the yeast does not grow on dry, normal skin, you can prevent candidiasis by keeping your skin clean and dry. Follow the simple suggestions:

- Use a blow dryer on a low setting to dry the body-fold areas after bathing.
- Sprinkle a drying powder such as Zeasorb-AF on these areas.
- If possible, wear loose-fitting clothes.
- Weight loss may be beneficial.