

sex talk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

wildfact

The word “yeast” is derived from the Old English word for boil or bubble, due to the role of these organisms in baking and fermentation.

Q If a male performs oral sex on a woman and 4 days later she has a yeast infection, what does that mean for the male? I am familiar with most STDs and yeast infections but I honestly don't know the answer to this. This happened months ago but I cannot stand not knowing.

A. Several types of yeast grow normally throughout the body, including the most common form, *Candida albicans*. The problem is, if the growth of yeast goes unchecked, these opportunistic pathogens can multiply rapidly and lead to yeast infections. While it is possible that your partner was exposed to yeast through oral sex or vice versa, it's unlikely that this was the primary reason for the infection. In other words, because yeast is already present in most people, there are usually other factors to consider.

Antibiotic use is one common culprit, since these drugs can diminish the bacterial “flora” that regulates yeast in the microbial ecosystem that is the human body. Wearing clothes that allow for a warm, moist environment (think tight fitting synthetic materials), high estrogen levels due to pregnancy, altered pH levels, and a lowered immune response can be other root causes.

If you are in good health, there is little need to worry. Oral yeast infections, also known as *thrush*, are rare in individuals with healthy

immune systems; so, too, are yeast infections that occur genitally in men. When male yeast infections do show up, they result in dry, itchy or irritated skin and possibly a burning sensation during urination. By contrast, the female anatomy provides a more conducive environment, which is why yeast infections are the second leading cause of vaginal infection, after bacterial vaginosis. Yeast infections in women are often signaled by a white, odorless, cottage cheese-like discharge, along with irritation and inflammation. If treatment is necessary, anti-fungal creams, vaginal suppositories, or tablets may be prescribed. It's best to wait until after the infection clears up before resuming sex to avoid undue discomfort.

Although yeast infections can be very irritating, they are not associated with serious health risks. For more information, go to www.health.arizona.edu or call 621-9202 to schedule an appointment at Campus Health.



Have a question? Send it to sextalk@email.arizona.edu

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