

## Yeast & Thrush

Adapted from Pomegranate Midwives

### Steps to treatment

#### *What is yeast?*

We all have both yeast (aka Candida) and bacteria in our gastrointestinal and vaginal tracks. In a healthy state they are in balance and are essential for optimal health.

However, with a yeast overgrowth, the yeast overpopulates our system and we can develop a yeast infection. This overgrowth can be on your nipples and in your milk ducts, as well as in your baby's mouth and gastrointestinal track. It causes sore nipples and can cause intraductal pain in your breasts (burning, shooting pain during and after feedings). In your baby, it may have no symptoms, or it may cause a sore mouth and tongue, and sometimes red, sore skin in the diaper area, or even irritability and excessive gas.

It is important to remember that the yeast overgrowth is throughout your whole system, and you want to restore a healthy balance between the yeast and the bacteria. Just killing off yeast doesn't resolve the problem. It will always return unless the proper balance is restored, and this takes diligence.

#### *Breastfeeding*

- It is important to get the best latch possible when you have sore nipples. Even if the cause of sore nipples is yeast, improving the latch can decrease the pain.

#### *Pain*

- For deep breast pain, ibuprofen 400 mg every four hours may be used until definitive treatment is working.

#### *Gentian violet (1% solution in water)*

- Can be bought from many pharmacies
- Use once a day for four to seven days
- Dip a clean cotton swab (Q-tip) in the gentian violet. Let the baby suck on the swab for a few seconds. The gentian violet usually spreads around the mouth quickly. If it does not, paint the inside of the mouth to cover as much of the inside of the cheeks and tongue as possible.

- Put the baby to the breast. In this way, both the baby's mouth and your nipple are treated.
- If, at the end of the feeding, you have a baby with a purple mouth, and two purple nipples, there is nothing more to do. If only one nipple is purple, paint the other one with the swab and the gentian violet.
- If pain is gone after four days, stop gentian violet.
- If better, but not gone after four days, continue for seven days.
- Stop after 7 days no matter what. If not better at all at four days, stop the gentian violet, but continue with the ointment as below.
- In rare cases, gentian violet causes irritation to the baby's mouth. Discontinue at once if this happens to your baby.

*Jack Newman's All Purpose Nipple Ointment (APNO)*

- By prescription from your care provider, from most pharmacies
- The ointment is applied sparingly after each feeding (except the feeding when using Gentian Violet). "Sparingly" means that the nipple and areola will shine but you won't be able to see the ointment. Do not wash or wipe it off.
- Use the ointment until you are pain free and then decrease frequency over a week or two until stopped.
- If you are not having less pain after 3 or 4 days of use, or if you need to be using it for longer than two or three weeks to keep pain free, get help or advice.
- If flaking, drying, or whiteness appears on the skin, substitute vitamin E oil or pure olive oil for APNO 1-3x/day

*Grapefruit seed extract (NOT grape seed extract)*

- Can be bought at most natural food stores and pharmacies
- Mix very well 5-10 drops in 30 ml (1 ounce) of water (preferably, but not necessarily, distilled). It does not need to be refrigerated.
- Use cotton swab to apply on both nipples and areolas after feeding (except the feeding when the using Gentian Violet)
- Let dry a few seconds, then apply APNO
- Should be used in conjunction with oral GSE for the parent: tablets, capsules, or liquid extract (see below)

- Use until pain is gone and then wean down slowly over the period of at least a week.
- If pain is not significantly improving after two to three days, increase the dose by 5 drops per 30 ml (ounce) of water. Can continue increasing until 25 drops per 30 ml of water.

#### *Diaper changes*

- Rinse with each diaper change with vinegar/water solution (1T. white distilled vinegar/1C. water)
- Do not use baby wipes, as they nurture the yeast. Use clear water for clean-up of stool, then rinse with the vinegar solution.
- Nystatin cream or zinc oxide for diaper area
- Sunlight is a good treatment for yeast overgrowth. Let baby sunbath naked on a diaper in the window on a sunny day.

#### *Internal balance*

For the parent:

- Eliminate all sugar including fruits for at least 3-4 days. Reduce refined starches, as well as fermented and aged products. In chronic or severe cases, more dietary changes can be helpful, such as eliminating all dairy until two weeks after symptoms are gone.
- Acidophilus 3x/day for 1-2 weeks
- Grapefruit seed extract
  - 250 mg (usually 2 tablets) OR 5 drops in water, 3x/day
- Oral GSE can be used before trying fluconazole, instead of fluconazole or in addition to fluconazole in resistant cases.

For the baby:

- When not using Gentian Violet, treat baby with acidophilus by rolling a wet finger in acidophilus powder – break open a capsule and let baby suck on the finger right before a feeding. Use 2x /day.

#### *External yeasts*

- Good hand washing, especially before and after touching any affected area.
- Remember: use clean hands or a new swab every time medication is touched.

- Boil any bottle nipples, pacifiers, and toys as well as any breast pumps the parent may use for at least 20 minutes
- Wash all baby clothes, bras, breast pads, breastfeeding tops, bed linens, baby blankets, etc., frequently in hot water. Dry well in hot dryer or sunlight.
- Add 15-20 drops of GSE OR 1C vinegar to rinse water of all laundry loads

This treatment plan seems very complex, but after a few days it will seem simpler, especially when you are feeling better because of all of your efforts. REMEMBER: Continue the recommended treatments and dietary restrictions for 2 weeks after all symptoms are gone. There is a temptation to grow lax after you and your baby are feeling better, but the yeast overgrowth can come back if your system is not restored to its proper balance.