

YEAST OVERGROWTH (Candida Albicans Can Affect Everyone!)

Candida Albicans has become a household word for many health conscious Americans. Candida itself is yeast that lives in the human digestive system.

A Candida yeast infection can be both digestive and systemic and is a social and medical dilemma without easy and specific answers or remedies. It is estimated that millions of men and women have a potential yeast infection that is directly or indirectly causing a significant number of health problems or conditions. Most notably, the **overgrowth** of the usually benign yeast, Candida Albicans, in the gastro-intestinal tract is believed to affect virtually every system of the body. The gastro-intestinal tract, genital urinary tract, endocrine, nervous and immune systems are the ones most susceptible and, therefore, symptomatic due to the presence of the yeast infection.

Chronic Candidiasis has been clinically defined for quite sometime; however, it was not until Orion Truss published, The Missing Diagnosis (P.O. Box 26508, Birmingham, Alabama – 1983) and William Crook published an excellent text entitled, The Yeast Connection (Professional Books, Jackson, Tennessee – 1984), that the public and many physicians became more aware of the magnitude of this condition.

Normally, Candida Albicans resides in the warm inner creases and crevices of the digestive tract of both men and women and the vaginal tract of women. Yet, if this yeast overgrows, or the immune system mechanisms are depleted and/or the normal lining of the intestinal tract is damaged – the body can absorb these yeast cells, particles of the yeast cells and various toxins. ***This can result in a significant disruption of the body processes resulting in the development of the “yeast syndrome.”*** The patient then is characterized by saying, “They feel sick all over.” The major waste product of the yeast cell activity is acetaldehyde and the bi-product ethanol. Many people with a Candida Albicans overgrowth have a low iron content because iron is hard to absorb when Candida is present; and therefore, they have little oxygen in the tissues.

Ethanol can cause excessive fatigue and reduces strength and stamina. It can also destroy enzymes needed for cell energy and causes the release of free radicals that encourage the aging process. Thus...Candida Albicans must be evaluated in patients who have had a long history of a slow degeneration of their overall health. The fact that it can rob the body of its nutrition and poison the tissues with its toxins gives Candida Albicans the potential of being a major contributor either directly or indirectly to a variety of symptoms some of which are: fatigue, immune malfunction, allergies, depression, chemical sensitivities, cystitis, acne, eczema, loss of sex drive, muscle aches, mood swings, indigestion, nasal congestion and discharge, painful intercourse, food allergies and many, many more!

As noted above from the variety of symptoms, chronic Candidiasis is a classic example of a, “multi-factorial,” condition. This means that there are many factors which can contribute to an overgrowth of Candida Albicans. ***Thus, the most effective, overall treatment involves addressing and correcting the factors which initiated the Candida overgrowth itself***, rather than just killing the yeast with anti-fungal agents either through synthetic pharmaceutical or natural alternatives. There are many predisposing factors to the Candida overgrowth; but, the majority stem around: decreased digestive secretions, dietary factors, impaired immunity, nutrient deficiency impaired liver function, underlying disease states and altered bowel flora and the use of various drugs; in particular... antibiotics.

One of the most useful screening methods for determining the likelihood of a yeast-related illness is a comprehensive questionnaire. A questionnaire that was adapted from Crook, W.G., The Yeast Connection, (Second Edition, Jackson, Tennessee – 1984) can be found at www.naturalwellnesscentre.net under the tab “health information” and scroll down to “Healthy Issues Questionnaires” or at www.silvercreeklabs.com.

Although, the questionnaire itself can be helpful, the best method for diagnosing chronic Candidiasis is a clinical evaluation by a physician knowledgeable about yeast-related illnesses. Typically a detailed medical history and patient questionnaire is utilized. The diagnosis may involve laboratory techniques such as nutritional microscopy for Candida or saliva/stool testing. Often the appropriate diagnosis is best made by evaluating a patient's previous medical history and current clinical symptoms.

Let's take a moment and discuss some aspects of the predisposing factors to Candida Albicans overgrowth. One predisposing factor is called the, "leaking gut syndrome." Increased gastrointestinal permeability or "leaking gut," can allow bodily absorption of large particles, various forms of bacteria, yeast components and other toxic chemicals. A leaking gut is one of the hallmark features of the yeast syndrome; but, the presence of an overgrowth of Candida Albicans is not a prerequisite for a leaking gut. Thus, a leaking gut can be caused by Candida Albicans overgrowth, as well as by other factors. As a result of the leaking gut, the patient may experience many symptoms associated to the yeast syndrome even though there is no overgrowth of Candida Albicans. Increased gut permeability due to chronic inflammation is the hallmark feature of this condition.

Another predisposing factor is the use of antibiotics. Antibiotics destroy not only harmful bacteria; but, good bacteria in our bowel. **When antibiotics destroy the friendly bacteria, it gives the Candida a chance to begin to multiply exponentially.** Anyone who has been treated with antibiotics for acne, bronchitis, major dental work or any condition where the antibiotic use has been more than one course for 7-10 days is a prime candidate for Candida. Another predisposing factor is the use of birth control pills made predominantly of the hormone estrogen. The use of supplemental estrogen in the synthetic form has been found to promote the growth of yeast.

Stress can cause an increased yeast growth for several reasons. A certain hormone called cortisol is released from the adrenal glands due to stress. Cortisol can depress the immune system and also raise your blood sugar. The elevation in blood sugar can feed the yeast cells allowing them to grow quickly. The depressed immune function will leave the body defenseless against sudden elevations of yeast or other types of outside infectious agents. This snowball effect is what tends to happen as stress and thus, cortisol goes up.

Hypothyroid (low thyroid) glandular function is a common cause of Candida. The thyroid gland has an important effect on the immune system and also helps the digestive system operate properly. A lack of proper digestive secretion can cause a reduction in the friendly bacteria in the bowel. Constipation is also frequent with a low thyroid. The body temperature can drop sufficiently due to decreased thyroid function and this can slow down or stop certain chemical reactions from taking place that actually inhibit Candida overgrowth. A digestive tract that is slow-moving or constipated becomes very alkaline. An alkaline environment in our gastrointestinal tract is exactly the condition in which Candida thrives. The more alkaline the digestive tract, the better the Candida can grow.

A number of dietary factors appear to promote the overgrowth of Candida. The most important factors are a high intake of sugar, milk and other dairy products. Food that contains a high amount of yeast or mold also enhances yeast growth. **It is well accepted that restriction of sugar intake is an absolute necessity in the treatment of chronic Candidiasis.** Most patients will do well by simply avoiding refined sugar and large amounts of honey or maple syrup.

Regardless of what symptoms a person may have from Candida, **they will typically get worse in hot, humid or muggy weather.** Just like any mold or fungus, heat and humidity help it grow and spread. As noted, symptoms can also vary at any time of year according to one's diet. Sugar, alcohol, starches, fermented food, sweets and even certain fruits increase symptoms by feeding the yeast organisms themselves. This causes them to grow and release more toxins; which ultimately produces more symptoms.

An overgrowth of Candida Albicans is a chronic and potentially dangerous infection. If left unchecked – it will continue to spread and can decrease the body's ability to fight off disease. Everyone... including children are susceptible to Candidiasis. The goal in treating a Candidiasis infection is to remove the yeast from the infected tissue and rebuild the person's immune system. ***The following treatment regime is considered critical in handling yeast infections:***

- Eat a low carbohydrate diet with no more than 60-80 grams of carbohydrates per day.
- Yeast feeds on sugar, wheat and dairy products and they should be avoided.
- Vinegar, mushrooms, cheeses, commercial breads and alcohol all have yeast mold and fungi in their production and should be avoided.
- Avoid using antibiotics and steroids unless absolutely necessary since these medications promote the growth of the yeast germ in the body.
- Caffeine has been shown that it can kill up to 75 percent of the friendly acidopholus flora in the colon per cup of coffee. Both decaffeinated or caffeinated coffee have the same effect and it takes the body approximately 5 hours to replace that flora depending upon a person's diet and the balance of the body at that time.
- Use a different form of birth control rather than birth control pills. The progesterone of these pills causes changes in the vaginal mucous membrane which makes it easier for Candida to multiply.
- Follow a Candida controlled diet.
- Be systematic and disciplined in use of the various therapies required because the miseries of the problem do not cease immediately with treatment. When Candida "die-off" they can cause some uncomfortable symptoms on a temporary basis. These symptoms soon disappear; however, it is a necessary result of Candida removal.

Candida is a living organism which excretes toxic waste. This can lead to a variety of problems as noted above including: poor digestion, fatigue, bloating, gas, poor elimination, mood swings, sugar and carbohydrate cravings, head pain, brain fog, female issues, skin rashes, lowered immunity, cold hands/feet and much, much more! Not only does our diet of excessive sugar and carbohydrates contribute to increased susceptibility – oral contraceptives and chemicals found in today's food and drink play a major contributing role as well. People that have been battling chronic symptoms such as fatigue and low immunity without relief should explore the possibility of Candida overgrowth and take all of the necessary steps to alleviate this condition.

When an alternative approach to the ongoing use of medication just to relieve symptoms is desired – our "Healthy Life by Design" program for repairing and restoring the body's physiology and healthy function should be considered. For additional information see us on the web at: www.naturalwellnesscentre.net.

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