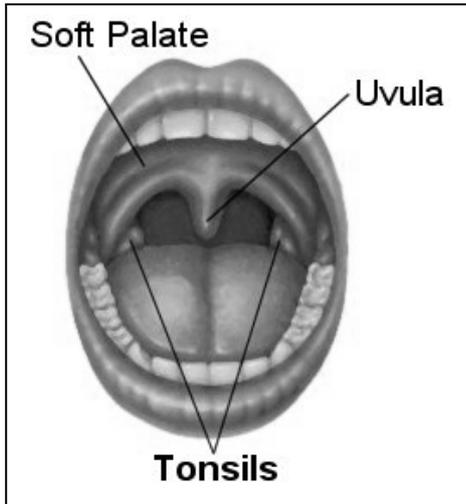


# Oral thrush



Oral thrush is caused by accumulation of a fungus (*Candida albicans*) that normally resides in the mouth. It may cause white patches or red areas typically under a denture that may be painful to touch and may bleed when scraped. Although most common in the very young or elderly, oral thrush may affect anyone. It is usually easily treated in people who have a normal immune system and have not received radiotherapy.

## WHAT CAUSES THRUSH?

Viruses, bacteria and fungi live in the mouth and are part of the body's protection against harmful organisms. If you take antibiotics, have dentures in a very dry mouth or have a weakened immune system (eg diabetes, or taking prednisolone), these fungi become overgrown.

## HOW IS THRUSH DIAGNOSED?

Commonly, the diagnosis can be made by inspection of the lesions. Dr Iseli may recommend a fiberoptic examination to check that the lesions do not extend to the back of your throat and voice box. The diagnosis is occasionally confirmed with a scraping or biopsy of lesions.

## HOW CAN ORAL THRUSH BE TREATED?

In health adults, the thrush should clear when you stop taking antibiotics.

1. **Carefully rinse your mouth** especially if you need to continue treatment eg inhaled steroid for asthma.
2. **Eat yogurt with active cultures** (eg acidophilus) will return healthy bacteria to your mouth.
3. **Improve oral hygiene** by brushing and flossing 2x/day and use a fluoride containing mouthwash at night.
4. **Leave your denture out overnight and soak in dilute Milton's hospital grade chlorine bleach (do NOT use household bleach)** use 5mL per 500mL water.
5. **Fungilin (amphotericin) lozenges** can be used for a troublesome infection. Suck 1 lozenge three times a day after meals until dissolved for 10 days.
6. **Daktarin (miconazole) ointment** should be smeared inside dentures before putting in the mouth in the morning for 10 days.

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