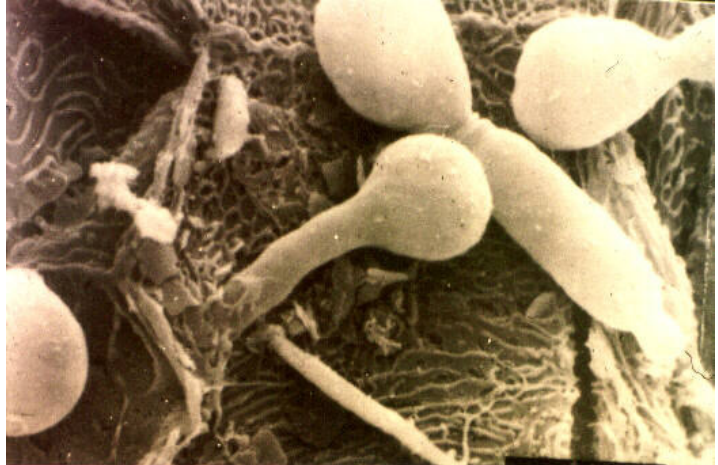


WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT CANDIDA?

by John Appleton

Many people think of Candida as a simple infection that can be addressed and resolved with a tube of topical fungicide. For women 'Thrush' is by far the most common manifestation of Candida (full name Candida Albicans) but there is a lot more that we should know about this simple 'yeast' if we wish to do more than simply treat the symptoms of what has been dubbed "The Twentieth Century Disease"



Candida Albicans should not be brushed off as a minor women's ailment. This little 'plant' is capable of causing a wide range of symptoms and it is able to mimic many symptoms of allergy as well as cause allergic reactions. Researchers now believe that successful containment of Candida may hold the key to control of allergies, particularly those related to chemicals in our food, water and air.

First we need to understand a little more about Candida, what it is and why it can be so damaging to our overall health. Yeasts which are related to moulds and fungi are small plants that flourish in a moist warm and dark environment. Such places are abundant in the human body; the crevices in the mucous membranes that line the wall of our intestines make a perfect home for Candida. Candida is so much at 'home' in our intestines that it is thought that 95%+ of human beings are host to it (although many of us are not aware of it). It is only when there is prolific growth of Candida that symptoms manifest and necessitate a visit to the doctor or pharmacy.

Like all plants, yeasts have a root system with a stem and foliage on top. The fertile soils for the roots of the candida 'plant' are the mucous membranes of the body. Imagine candida plants like a forest on the walls of our intestines. This is perhaps where the similarities with other plants end. Plants which use their roots to draw nutrients up from the soil to feed the branches leaves and flowers release the waste products of their metabolism in the atmosphere. It's good news for us that the major waste product is oxygen.

Candida Albicans works in reverse. Nutrients which are extracted from our intestines are taken in through the foliage and waste products are released out through the roots. The food of choice for Candida is **sugar and white flour** which are found in abundance in the typical western diet. When either of these come into contact with Candida yeasts, enzymes in the foliage convert them to the chemicals they need to sustain themselves. Unfortunately for us, the waste product of this process is a very toxic chemical called acetaldehyde which is a narcotic of the alcohol family. It would perhaps be ok for us if the acetaldehyde were eliminated via our digestive tract but it isn't. Instead, via the root system of the Candida 'plants', it is released into the mucous membranes which are richly supplied with blood vessels and thus it soon it finds its way into the bloodstream and causes major problems in the body.

Candida roots can also cause cracks in the walls of our digestive tract in much the same way as roots from trees crack pavements. These cracks allow partially digested food particles to enter the bloodstream and thus we can end up with what is known as 'Leaky Gut Syndrome' which is often found to be responsible for digestive disorders, allergies, food intolerances and chemical sensitivities.

The list of symptoms that have been associated with a Candida overgrowth is seemingly endless

Here are just a few of them:

Digestive System Symptoms

- Colitis
- Gas
- Constipation
- Diarrhoea
- Chronic heartburn

Allergic Symptoms

- Hay fever
- Sinusitis
- Earaches
- Asthma
- Food and chemical sensitivities

Central Nervous System Symptoms

- Headaches
- Depression
- Chronic fatigue
- Memory loss
- Inability to concentrate
- Feeling "spacey"
- Numbness, burning, tingling
- Mood swings
- Anxiety
- Brain fog

Genitourinary Tract Symptoms

- Vaginal or rectal itching, discharge
- Menstrual irregularities
- Cramping
- Endometriosis
- Cystitis
- Kidney and bladder infections

Generalized Symptoms

- Chronic Fatigue
- Diabetes
- Fingernail and toenail fungus
- Athletes foot
- Joint pain and stiffness
- Cold hands and feet

Blurred vision
Sleep disturbance
Food cravings
Numbness and tingling
Craving for sweets
PMS

So how do we become infected with Candida?

Most often we are born with Candida, contracting it from our mothers as we pass through the birth canal and literally scoop up mouthfuls of candida 'plants' with the bottom lip. The Candida in baby's mouth is then pushed down to the intestine with its first few mouthfuls of milk.

The degree of discomfort a baby (and adults) experiences from the Candida infection is determined by the size of the colony in the intestines. Although the colony may be small at birth and there may be few if any symptoms it can grow as time goes by **especially if the diet is high in sugar and white flour**. The formulas that babies are put on in lieu of mother's milk are often high in sugar content and can instigate the growth from a small colony into a troublesome large colony. A large Candida colony can grow on the walls of the digestive tract **all the way from the mouth to the rectum**. It's not only women who suffer from Candida overgrowth; males get it too.

In ideal circumstances, Candida resides harmlessly in the body, kept in check by our immune system and by 'friendly' bacteria which live with alongside it. Change this delicate balance and we are in trouble.

For teens and adults problems begin with poor dietary habits and use of antibiotics.

Our western diet is high in refined carbohydrates and white flour products that are converted to sugar soon after ingestion. This as I have mentioned above is the preferred food for Candida.

In her book 'Candida, A Twentieth Century Disease', Shirley S. Lorenzani, Ph.D. reveals "that before antibiotics were introduced in 1947, only 1 out of 4 vaginal infections was due to the yeast called Candida Albicans. Today, Candida is the cause of 9 out of 10 infections."

Dr. Christiane Northrup author of Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom states that "in the last decade, while the percentage of women has increased by only 13 percent, the number of antifungal prescriptions for women has increased by 53 percent."

It's not just use of antibiotics prescribed by doctors. We ingest antibiotics in many ways without knowing it by eating meat from animals, such as beef, chicken and farmed salmon which are fed antibiotics not only if they get sick but to prevent them getting sick. We pay the price for this in many ways.

The problem with antibiotics is, they are mostly non-specific. i.e., they kill off anything and everything 75% all bacteria, 'good' or 'bad.' The resulting incidental destruction of 'beneficial bacteria,' which would otherwise limit growth of undesirable organisms such as Candida ('yeast') allows it to take over and proliferate.

Lactobacillus acidophilus is one such bacterium killed by antibiotics. It is a normal resident of the intestines and lives quite happily on the bowel wall where, among other things, it breaks up proteins and carbohydrates into lactic acid to help maintain an acid medium on the bowel. Because it takes up space on the wall, it limits, by its presence, the spread of Candida colonies. When lactobacillus is killed by antibiotics, clear spaces are left on the intestinal wall for Candida colonies to grow.

I read recently that one cup of coffee can kill 70+% of the beneficial bacteria in the gut.

I have often read that the 'Pill' is driver of Candida infections but the jury seems to be out on this. The 'Pill' though can affect hormones that, amongst other things, can affect a woman's ability to metabolise (process) sugar. As Yeast feeds on sugar, if there is extra sugar in the body, yeast will use it to grow.

What can we do about Candida?

The first thing we need to understand is that in order to get on top of Candida we must be willing to take some responsibility for the condition and implement a dietary regime that will provide a less accommodating environment for it. Don't expect your doctor to provide a quick fix solution. There isn't one.

The 'Candida Diet' is one of the most difficult to embrace (because of the sacrifices it involves) but it is essential for anyone serious about dealing to the problem:

- Yeast, Bread and Pastries
- All fermented products
- Alcohol and all fermented drinks
- Sugar and all sweet things
- White Flour In All Forms
- Malted Products
- Citrus Fruit Juices
- Many Vitamin Products
- Milk and milk products
- Processed and Smoked Meats and Fish
- Dried and Candied Fruits
- Melons, Ripe Bananas and Grapes
- Mushrooms and all fungi
- Cheeses + things made with a fermentation process
- Certain Nuts
- Foods Going Stale
- Processed Foods
- Drugs which promote the growth of yeasts - steroids, antibiotics, the contraceptive pill
- Coffee and tea
- Mould, Mildew and Damp

I have recently be looking into other non toxic and user friendly ways to restore the balance to digestive tract and thus overcome problems with Candida. Probiotics are an obvious choice when it comes to replenishing the 'good bacteria after a course of antibiotics or several weeks on the Candida Diet. It is essential to have a good one and I recommend seeing a Naturopath for a high potency brand Metagenics."Ultra Flora".

When you start to get serious with Candida, just beware of the "die-off" (Herxheimer) reaction. When a large number of Candida are killed off during the initial period of treatment, a great amount of toxic material is suddenly released. This can produce certain uncomfortable effects such as flu symptoms stuffiness, headache, general aches, something unusual such as numbness in the legs or mental confusion. The die-off reaction normally lasts from one day to no longer than a week.

Please draw your own conclusions after contemplating the effect of the radically health impeding, processed, refined, de-natured chemicalised, over sweetened diet that most of us are consuming. How can anyone expect a body and mind to function well when it is so completely out of tune with its natural requirements.

More information: John Appleton - Phone 489-9362 appletonassoc@xtra.co.nz