

Candida

Flora that live in the small intestine number in the billions, and most are not named. Diet is one of several factors that influence the bacterial population. "Good" digestive flora include Lactobacillus species (*L. acidophilus*) and Bifidobacteria. Fermented foods such as miso, vinegar, wine, kefir, "good quality" yogurt and cheeses, sourdough starter, mushrooms (kombucha), and tamari contribute to beneficial bacteria in the small intestine.

"Bad" digestive flora include *Candida albicans*. Candida is a yeast species that is normally present in the digestive tract in small quantities, and none of us will ever get rid of candida completely. Each type of digestive flora sends its own "hormonal" signals, as well as waste products, into the bloodstream, and some attribute the sugar cravings and mental symptoms to "hormonal" messages and waste products released by candida. Others contend that candida can grow on the inner linings of the brain, spinal cord and in the cerebral-spinal fluid, as well as in organs like the prostate and uterus, which ends up causing problems associated with this yeast. Either way, when allowed to overgrow, the hyphae ("roots" formed by most yeast) can open up gaps in the tight junctions between the cells of the small intestine. Watch bread mold to get an idea of how this process happens.

Candida grows well when other digestive flora are absent (after antibiotics), intestinal immunity is low, and the diet is high in simple carbohydrates, alcohol and sugars. Some candida experts estimate that as much as 85% of the US population has a problem with overgrowth of candida, thanks to our diet laden with starches, sugars, beer, and the common use of antibiotics and birth control pills. Candida overgrowth in the digestive tract can cause a host of symptoms including bloating & gas, fatigue, abdominal cramping, prostate symptoms, sinus and allergy symptoms, depression & irritability, inability to concentrate or think clearly. Candida is the same organism that is responsible for vaginal yeast infections, or skin rashes in warm moist folds that become itchy/painful, hot and "beefy red" (athlete's foot, jock itch, diaper rash, etc.).

Doctors Nearpass and Pollack have compiled many effective methods of testing for, and helping people bring candida levels back into check, with normalized digestive flora. Both doctors specialize in eliminating the problems of candida overgrowth, and the associated symptoms. Below are some testing options, but schedule a visit if you suspect you need to combat candida overgrowth, because it is a process.

CANDIDA TEST OPTIONS

Stool test. Diagnos-Techs Laboratory. Kits available from Mountain-River Clinic.

+ Accurate for candida coming out of the digestive tract. \$55 for candida testing only. \$295 for testing of all types of fungus, bacteria, parasites, and digestive inflammation markers.

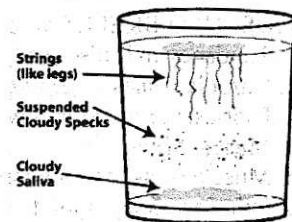
- Takes 2 weeks to get results.

Saliva test.

+ Free. Done at home. Upon waking, work up some saliva and spit into a clear glass of water before putting anything into your mouth. If there are "strings", suspended cloudy specks or saliva that sank to the bottom, you might suspect a candida problem. Normal saliva should float.

- Uncertain accuracy and source. Used at www.candidasupport.org

SALIVA TEST



Candida Questionnaire. "The Yeast Connection & Women's Health" – Dr. William Crook

+ Free. Done anytime, easy to calculate numerical score: if your total score is over 150, suspect problems being caused by candida (at least in part). See questions that follow.

- Uncertain accuracy - most people who take this questionnaire are going to feel like they have a candida problem, since candida symptoms overlap with many conditions.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Part 1: History *Circle any answers that fit your history.*

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| 1. Have you taken <u>tetracyclines or other antibiotics for acne</u> for 1 month or longer? | 50 |
| 2. Have you taken <u>broad spectrum antibiotics</u> for >2 months, or >4 times in a year? | 50 |
| 3. Have you taken a broad spectrum antibiotic ever? | 6 |
| 4. Have you been bothered by persistent <u>prostatitis, vaginitis / reproductive sytem problems?</u> | 25 |
| 5. Have you been <u>pregnant</u> two or more times? | 5 |
| 6. " one time? | 3 |
| 7. Have you taken <u>cortisone-based medications</u> for more than 2 weeks? | 15 |
| 8. " less than 2 weeks? | 6 |
| 9. Have you taken <u>birth control pills</u> for more than 2 years? | 15 |
| 10. " for ½ - 2 years? | 6 |
| 11. Does exposure to <u>perfumes, insecticides, fabric shop odors and other chemicals:</u> | |
| Cause severe symptoms? | 20 |
| Cause mild symptoms? | 5 |
| 12. Does exposure to <u>tobacco smoke</u> cause moderate to severe symptoms? | 10 |
| 12. Are your symptoms worse on <u>damp, muggy days or in moldy places?</u> | 20 |
| 13. Have you had <u>athlete's foot, ringworm, jock itch, skin/nail fungal infections</u> persistently? | 20 |
| 14. " mild or moderately? | 10 |
| 15. Do you <u>crave sugar?</u> | 10 |
| 16. Do you crave <u>bread & pastries?</u> | 10 |
| 17. Do you crave <u>alcoholic beverages?</u> | 10 |

Part 2: Major Symptoms *Circle any answers that fit your symptoms. No points if not applicable.*

If symptom is: Occasional/mild=3 points; frequent/moderately severe=6 points; severe/disabling=9 points

<p>NERVOUS SYSTEM</p> <p>1. Fatigue or lethargy 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>2. Drained feeling 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>3. Poor memory 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>4. Spacey or unreal feeling 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>5. Inability to make decisions 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>6. Numbness, burning or tingling 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>7. Insomnia 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>8. Drowsiness 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>9. Irritability or jitteriness 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>10. Incoordination 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>11. Inability to concentrate. 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>12. Frequent mood swings 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>13. Headaches 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>14. Dizziness/loss of balance 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>15. Pressure above ears 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>16. Attacks of anxiety or crying 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>MUSCULO-SKELETAL & SKIN</p> <p>1. Tendency to bruise easily 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>2. Chronic rashes or itching 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>3. Psoriasis or recurrent hives 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>4. Muscle aches 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>5. Muscle weakness or paralysis 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>6. Pain / swelling in joints 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>RESPIRATORY SYSTEM</p> <p>1. Pain or tightness in chest 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>2. Wheezing or shortness of breath 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>3. Cough / recurrent bronchitis 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>4. Nasal congestion / post nasal drip 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>5. Nasal itching 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>6. Sore throat 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>7. Laryngitis / loss of voice 3 / 6 / 9</p>	<p>DIGESTIVE SYSTEM</p> <p>1. Indigestion or heartburn 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>2. Food sensitivity or intolerance 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>3. Mucus in stools 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>4. Rectal itching 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>5. Dry mouth or throat 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>6. Rash or blisters in mouth 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>7. Bad breath 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>8. Abdominal pain 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>9. Constipation 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>10. Diarrhea 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>11. Bloating, belching or intestinal gas 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>REPRODUCTIVE & URINARY SYSTEM</p> <p>1. Vaginal burning, itching or discharge 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>2. Prostatitis. 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>3. Impotence 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>4. Loss of sexual desire or feeling 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>5. Endometriosis or infertility 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>6. Cramps / menstrual irregularities 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>7. Premenstrual tension / PMS 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>8. Urinary frequency, urgency, or incontinence 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>9. Burning on urination 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>OTHER</p> <p>1. Cold hands or feet / chilliness 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>2. Shaking or irritability when hungry 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>3. Foot, hair or body odor 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>4. Spots in front of eyes or erratic vision 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>5. Burning or tearing of eyes 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>6. Recurrent ear infections or fluid in ears 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>7. Ear pain or tinnitus 3 / 6 / 9</p> <p>YOUR TOTAL (history & major symptoms) = _____ <i>Over 150 points, suspect problems with candida.</i></p>
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