

# Thrush

Date:

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your child may have been exposed to **thrush** while at child care.

## **What is thrush?**

Thrush is an infection of the mouth caused by a fungus called *Candida*.

## **What are the symptoms of thrush?**

Children with thrush have white patches on the inside of cheeks, gums, and tongue. These patches generally are painless. Some children also have a rash in the diaper area or in other skin folds of the body, also caused by a *Candida* yeast infection. A yeast infection of the diaper area is very red, often contains red pimples, may be shiny, and is worse in skin folds. Yeast infections of the diaper area may be very uncomfortable.

## **How does a person get thrush?**

The fungus that causes thrush normally lives in the mouths of many healthy children and adults. Sometimes the fungus overgrows in the mouth, and thrush develops. Infants are more likely to get thrush because their immature immune systems are not as good at keeping down fungus levels as older children. Thrush and other yeast infections also occur more often in people taking antibiotics and those with weakened immune systems. The fungus can be spread by contact with the saliva of an infected person.

## **When is a person with thrush contagious?**

A person with thrush is contagious before treatment, but as mentioned above many people have the fungus that causes thrush without having any symptoms.

## **How can I prevent my child or others from coming down with thrush?**

- Wash hands well and frequently.
- Wash, rinse, and sanitize toys that touch the mouth of a child before use by another child.
- Boil bottles, nipples, and pacifiers of a child with thrush. Nipples and pacifiers may need to be thrown away if thrush won't go away with treatment or if it reoccurs.
- Consult with your health care provider regarding anti-fungal medicine.

## **If my child develops thrush, must he/she stay away from child care?**

Yes, until after treatment is started.

