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CANDIDA ALBICANS OVERGROWTH

Candida albicans, a yeast that normally lives within your body can make many people feel sick if it is in excess. Yeast can cause many health disorders such as fatigue, headache, depression, premenstrual tension, hyperactivity, skin disorders, digestive problems and more.

Everyone has candida, a form of yeast (Candida albicans) normally confined to the lower bowels, the vagina, and the skin. In healthy individuals with strong, functioning immune systems, it is harmless and kept in check by "good" bacteria, called probiotics like acidophilus and bifidobacteria. But if the balance of the intestinal environment is altered by a compromised immune system or other factors, then opportunistic candida grows in the intestine or can infect other body tissues. The candida becomes pathogenic, transforming from a simple yeast into an aggressive (mycelial) fungus that can severely compromise one's health. This condition is known as candidiasis.

Candidiasis can affect areas of the body far removed from candida colonizations in the gastrointestinal tract and vagina. Its symptoms cover a broad spectrum and the condition can cause a number of diseases ranging from allergies, vaginitis and thrush (a whitish fungus in the mouth or vagina), to an invasion of the genital-urinary tract, eyes, liver, heart, or central nervous system. At its most destructive, candidiasis is involved in auto-immune diseases such as Addison's disease and AIDS. Common symptoms of candidiasis include digestive problems such as bloating, cramping; wheezing, earaches, generalized fatigue, poor concentration and loss of libido.

The likely candidate for candida overgrowth is someone whose medical history includes: prolonged or repeated use of antibiotics which are frequently given for urinary and ear infections, sinusitis, bronchitis, and other infections; steroid hormone medication such as cortisone or corticosteroids, often

prescribed for skin conditions such as rashes, eczema, or psoriasis; ulcer medication (such as Tagamet and Zantac); stress, high sugar intake and oral contraceptives. Certain illnesses such as diabetes, cancer, and AIDS can also increase susceptibility to candida overgrowth.

ANTIBIOTICS

Antibiotics, life-saving cures for many diseases, may be the single greatest cause of candidiasis, because antibiotic treatment for infections is nondiscriminatory, killing the "good" intestinal chemistry-balancing bacteria, as well as the "bad" infection-causing bacteria.

The good bacteria strains are called acidophilous and bifidobacteria. They produce natural antifungal substances (as well as antibacterial materials) as part of their control mechanism over yeast. One of the activities of "good" bacteria is the manufacture of a B vitamin, biotin, which exerts control over yeast. When biotin is lacking, as a result of damage by antibiotics to the good bacteria, yeast has a chance to change from its simple yeast form into a different organism, and encroaching mycelial (vegetative) fungus.

LEAKY GUT / INTESTINAL PERMEABILITY

Antibiotics can cause the altered imbalanced intestinal environment that candida requires to change into its fungal form. Candida then puts down tiny rootlets which penetrate the tissues on which the yeast is growing. When this happens to be the inner wall of the intestine, it breaks down the barrier which exists between the closed world of the bowel and the body. Toxic debris, yeast waste products, and partially digested proteins are allowed into the bloodstream, resulting in allergic and toxic reactions. Healthy bifidobacteria and acidophilus intestinal colonies can usually withstand one or two short

episodes of antibiotics without serious harm. If, however, use of antibiotics is frequent or prolonged (as with a course for acne treatment or/and infections), then the spread of candida becomes inevitable.

DIET AND CHRONIC CANDIDIASIS

A number of dietary factors appear to promote the overgrowth of candida. The most important factor is a high intake of sugar and carbohydrates, foods containing a high content of yeast or mold, fermented products (alcohol & vinegar) and mushrooms.

DIAGNOSIS OF THE YEAST SYNDROME

The best method for diagnosing chronic candidiasis is clinical evaluation by a physician knowledgeable about yeast-related illness. More than likely, the manner in which the doctor will diagnose the yeast syndrome will be based on clinical judgement from a detailed medical history. Vega testing is an additional tool that has proven to be an effective method of assessing candida overgrowth and monitoring the program of a candida elimination program.

TREATING CANDIDIASIS

Successful treatment of candidiasis first requires the reduction of factors which predispose a patient to candida overgrowth. Secondly, the patient's immune function must be strengthened. Diet, nutritional supplements, herbal medicine, and yeast killers are some of the choices physicians use to accomplish these ends. A program will be tailored to your individual health needs.

SYMPTOMS OF CANDIDIASIS

There is a wide array of candidiasis symptoms depending on an individual's age, sex, environmental exposure, and immune systems. These include (but are not limited to):

Mental/Emotional:

- *fatigue, especially after eating*
- *depression &/or mood swings*
- *memory loss, poor concentration*
- *"brain fog"*

Gastrointestinal problems:

- *bloating*
- *gas*
- *intestinal cramps*
- *chronic diarrhea*
- *constipation*
- *heartburn*
- *rectal itching*

Immune System:

- *food allergies*
- *inhalant allergies*
- *hayfever*
- *eczema*
- *recurrent fungal infections such as "jock itch," athlete's foot, or ringworm*
- *recurrent infections: vaginal, urinary, ear, etc.*

Hormonal:

- *premenstrual syndrome and hormonal problems*
- *prostatitis*

Liver:

- *sensitivity to chemicals, perfumes, smoke, or other odors*
- *a feeling of being lightheaded or drunk after minimal wine, beer, or certain foods*

Sinus:

- *Sinus congestion and infections*
50% of people with chronic sinus problems have fungal overgrowth harbouring in the sinuses.

These symptoms may worsen in moldy places (such as basements) or in damp climates, and after eating or drinking foods containing sugar.