

Candida: The Fiend With Many Faces

What do Ellen, a 31 year-old novelist complaining of hair loss, bloated stomach, and acne; Phillip, 36 year-old interior designer reporting frequent headaches and chronic fatigue; and Mary, a 50 year-old accountant struggling with respiratory problems, aching joints, constipation, and severe depression, have in common? Each is receiving warning signals from a very outspoken organism, a yeast named *Candida albicans*.

Living in the mouth, throat, intestines, and genito-urinary tract of most humans, *Candida* lets us know when our health style is favoring its health above our own.

Since most of us have been sharing living quarters with the *albicans* family for quite some time now, formal introductions are well overdue. This strain of yeast is a member of a broader classification of organisms known as fungi. Should we think of them as plants, or as animals? Mycologists, scientists who specialize in fungi, aren't sure. They have traditionally classified fungi as plants, but in many ways these creatures are more like animals. They contain no chlorophyll and cannot make their own food. Like animals, they require oxygen and like us, they have a nucleus within their cells. Thinking that we may be observing unique beings that are neither plants, nor animals, some mycologists refer to them as the third kingdom.

The third kingdom is far-flung. Fungi thrive in cool tropical climates. They are in the air we breathe and on most of the things we touch. Some prefer moist shady soil. Others choose water.

Manure is the favorite habitat for some species while others revel in dead leaves, citrus fruit, or leftover food.

Candida albicans prefers people. The yeast enters newborn infants during or shortly after birth. When its health is greater than that of the infant, we label the condition oral thrush. The yeast, however, is usually kept in check by the infant's immune system and it produces no symptoms. How do we know it's there? Studies have shown that by the age of six months, 90% of all babies have a positive skin test to *Candida*.

Adults are even more hospitable to this organism. One study found *Candida* antibodies in 163 of 169 adults. Another concluded that 100% of adults studied were supporting *Candida* colonies. Antibody levels, cultures of mucosal surfaces, delayed skin tests – all point to the same conclusion. Virtually all humans share space with *Candida albicans*.

Its favorite spaces are the mucosal surfaces of the gastrointestinal and genito-urinary tracts. When our health style is one that produces a strong immune system, *Candida* is a silent partner, its proliferation kept minimal. But when our health habits slip into self-destruction, *Candida* growth can proceed unchecked. The resulting symptoms are signals to examine our health style. How have we weakened our defenses?

The human immune system is acutely sensitive to many factors: touch, sounds, thoughts, foods, drugs, the list goes on. Distress in any of these areas weakens our defenses. The immune system, whose duties include controlling fungus growth within our bodies, becomes sluggish and inefficient. That

inefficiency allows Candida to multiply rapidly.

Signals soon follow. They are most common near the sites of original yeast colonies – extreme ends of the gastrointestinal and genito-urinary tracts. If the immune system is kept weak, toxins produced by Candida will move, via the bloodstream, to all parts of the body. Now any tissue can become part of Candida's communication network.

With such a variety of signals, one would assume Candidiasis to be an easy diagnosis for modern medical technology. Perform a lab test. Get an answer. Not so! Since all humans carry *Candida albicans*, a laboratory procedure with adequate sensitivity will detect it in everyone, even in those with no symptoms.

Candida's overgrowth cannot be diagnosed using techniques of orthodox medicine. Here, clearly, Candida does us a favor. In order to make a diagnosis, clinicians are forced to examine not blood, nor discharge, nor antibodies; but instead must examine the lifestyle of the patient.

Diet and Drugs

Of all the factors that make up one's lifestyle, diet and drug usage are the most significant in determining overgrowth of *Candida albicans*. Not coincidentally, the same foods that have been found to commonly upset human body chemistry are also the foods that Candida prefers: chocolate, sweets, grains, dairy products, fruit juices, nuts. When these foods predominate in one's diet, Candida usually proliferates. Its growing numbers have a hearty appetite and create a craving for more of the yeast-feeding goodies.

It is not unusual for Candidiasis patients to have lost their taste for vegetables and animal protein, foods on which Candida does not thrive. If these people are health sophisticates, their cravings lean towards honey, oatmeal, whole grain bread, cheese, dried fruit and nut mixes, and peanut butter. The All-American goes for chocolate chip cookies, milk, pizza, alcoholic beverages, and other refined carbohydrates. Candida overgrowth often creates a sensitivity to most other molds and yeasts. This produces a yearning for fermented, pickled, smoked or dried foods.

Women experience food cravings most strongly during the week prior to their menstrual period. Compulsive overeating of these foods is common. One young woman put a chain and padlock on her refrigerator door to prevent midnight raiding. Candida won her over though, because she drove four miles to her parent's house to get the key, and then returned to sit down at 3 a.m. for a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

Drugs upset the ecological balance of the intestinal flora, suppress our immune system, and imbalance hormones will allow Candida overgrowth. These include antibiotics such as penicillin, ampicillin, tetracycline, erythromycin, amoxicillin, and keflex. Immuno-suppressants, chemicals which reduce inflammation by paralyzing our defense department, include cortisone, prednisone, and other steroid type medications. Birth control pills contribute to Candidiasis by upsetting the hormone balance.

Diagnosis of Candidiasis is best determined in a detailed chronological health history. Symptoms, diet, and drug

usage must be correlated. Candida can create signals anywhere in the body. The onset of these signals is usually linked with overindulgence of the previously listed foods or use of the above-mentioned drugs. In females, hormonal changes during pregnancy also contribute to Candida growth.

Common Signals of Candida Overgrowth

Gastrointestinal Tract

Chronic heartburn
Gastritis
Colitis
Distension and bloating
Gas
Constipation
Diarrhea

Central Nervous System

Headaches
Depression
Lethargy
Agitation
Hyperirritability
Memory loss
Inability to concentrate

“Allergic” Symptoms

Hay fever
Sinusitis
Earaches
Hives
Asthma
Food and chemical sensitivities

Genito-urinary Tract

Yeast vaginitis
Menstrual irregularities
Cramping
Endometriosis
Cystitis
Urethritis
Kidney and bladder infections

Generalized

Fatigue
Joint pain and stiffness
Cold hands and feet
Increased body hair
Numbness and tingling
Food cravings
Loss of libido

Case Histories

Case #1: Acne, bloating, fatigue, repeated urinary tract infections – none of these motivated Ellen, a 31 year-old novelist to seek help and she had learned to live with these signals. Her most recent signal, however, was more difficult to accept. Her hair was falling out in handfuls.

Her health history was reviewed from infancy to the present and correlating symptoms with dietary abuse, antibiotic therapy and use of birth control made it apparent that Candida was very likely a part of Ellen’s health crisis.

Since childhood, her diet had been heavily laced with chocolate, sweets, and pizza. Recurrent ear infections in childhood had prompted repeated rounds of penicillin. Acne, which began in adolescence and continued to the present, had evoked prescriptions for tetracycline. Menstrual cramps, yeast vaginitis, cystitis, and more acne followed. Ellen was now fatigued, both mentally and physically. Her creative thinking was almost at a standstill. She had not been able to begin work on the rewrite requested months earlier by her publisher.

After three weeks on the program, Ellen reported weight loss, a flat stomach, skin almost clear of acne, no more hair loss, and a dramatic increase in energy. She was sleeping three hours less daily and awakening feeling rested. Her

previous depression had been replaced by smiles as she reported that her rewrite would be completed within the month.

Case #2: Phillip, a 36 year-old interior designer, looked like an ad for a health spa he frequented. With regular workouts, he had produced enviable muscles. He was the proverbial picture of health. Looks, however, were deceiving. Phillip was plagued with headaches and fatigue. He had lost his taste for animal protein and preferred fruits, grains, dairy products, and honey. He was fighting weight gain in spite of regular exercise and felt full and loggy after meals. Sinusitis was frequent, bowel movements infrequent.

Candidiasis is more difficult to spot in men than in women. Phillip was recommended several diet changes and supplementation and weeks later, he returned for a follow up. He said that he had never felt better in his life. Specifics? Excellent bowel function, no more struggle with weight gain, a head free of aches, and incredible energy. What was most incredible to him? His lifelong craving for sweets was gone and he now preferred animal protein and vegetables.

Case #3: Mary, a 50 year-old accountant, on the Cornell Medical Index showed 109 signs and symptoms of Candidiasis. Food preferences included dairy products, chocolate, wine, and bread. Drug usage included birth control pills and repeated antibiotics.

After several days on an anti-yeast and drug regimen, Mary's symptoms began diminishing. Food sensitivity testing revealed 26 foods that were weakening her immune system. Elimination of these foods gave her another boost.

The addition of supplements soon added more impetus to her improvement. Two months after her first visit, she took the Cornell Medical Index again. This time her signs and symptoms had dropped from 109 to 32!

Supplements

An excellent supplement for Candidiasis is a product called *Fungistatin*[™]. It is a nutritional anti-fungal that contains a variety of fatty acids and biotin, both of which are well known for their effectiveness in controlling *Candida albicans* and other yeast or fungal infections. Some of the effective ingredients in *Fungistatin*[™] are:

Biotin: a coenzyme that is a necessary nutrient for intestinal bacteria and yeast. When biotin is lacking, yeast can transform and develop tentacles that pierce the intestinal wall looking for biotin. It is in this way that they release toxins and spores into the bloodstream. High levels of biotin prevent the yeast from developing into this form, and is therefore one of the essential ingredients in *Fungistatin*[™].

Fatty Acids: Certain fatty acids have been shown to be very effective at inhibiting mold growth. They do this by blocking nutrients from entering the yeast and fungus cells by disrupting the cell membranes. The fatty acids in *Fungistatin*[™] are: *Sorbic acid (potassium sorbate)*, *Sodium Caprylate*, and *Calcium Propionate*.

Another excellent product is **Tanalbit**[™], which is a blend of naturally condensed plant tannins that are powerful astringents and antioxidants. One ingredient in particular, the lotus rhizome, is particularly effective in disabling microbial/mycotic organisms such as yeast and fungus. Another

element that makes Tanalbit™ very effective is that it is encapsulated in a complex protein called *casein* which enables it to travel all the way into the lower intestine, where yeast and fungal infections tend to be the most entrenched.

Probiotics are especially important for replenishing the beneficial intestinal flora that help against yeast and fungal infections, aid digestion, as well as support the immune system. Our product *Ultra Biotic™* has high concentrations of several strains of intestinal flora, and most importantly, is dairy-free because *Candida* loves to feast on dairy products.

Oregano and *garlic* are natural herbal supplements that have been used for centuries as anti-fungals and anti-parasitics. Spicing your foods with these herbs is a good and simple preventative for overgrowth of *Candida*. Overgrowth, however, requires either special formulations and concentrations of these herbs, or fully implemented diet changes as well as supplementation.

A Warning System

The intimate relationship between man and yeast begins early and is enduring. What is the true nature of this relationship? Fungi that coexist with living things are viewed as symbionts if the partnership is of mutual benefit. Those that attack living things to the disadvantage of the host are called parasites.

Most people are prone to view *Candida albicans* as a parasite. They see us as the innocent victims of a malicious, opportunistic organism. It invades our bodies and attacks our tissues. In that context, we are perpetually at war.

Every sign and symptom of disease is an indication that we are losing.

In reality, we are not innocent victims of disease. We are in control of our health. Every symptom is a signal, an important message that something in our health style needs to be altered. When we have made the proper changes, our self-healing mechanisms will be free to perform the functions for which they were created.

As an important part of this early warning system, *Candida albicans* is an invaluable symbiont. It gives us signals when drugs, food and other forms of distress have weakened our defenses. It is our smoke detector, our burglar alarm, our seat belt buzzer. The signals may be annoying, but the early warning enables us to avoid disaster.


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