



# SOMETHING YOU NEED TO KNOW: HOW TO REDUCE YOUR RISK OF GENITAL FUNGAL INFECTION

## ➤ WHY IS THIS LEAFLET FOR YOU?

Fungal infection - known as thrush - is a possible side effect of some medications used to help you control your type 2 diabetes. This is a very common condition, especially in women. Men and women who have diabetes are at higher risk. It is usually easily treated. This leaflet will help you to understand why you may develop a genital fungal infection and how to manage it.

## ➤ YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN THIS LEAFLET BECAUSE YOU ARE TAKING AN SGLT2 INHIBITOR, THIS IS HOW THEY WORK?

SGLT2 inhibitor tablets are taken once a day. They work by making your kidneys remove some of the excess glucose from your blood and then passing it into your urine to be removed from the body.

This can help to control your glucose levels and may also help you to lose weight. Being overweight makes it more difficult to control your diabetes.

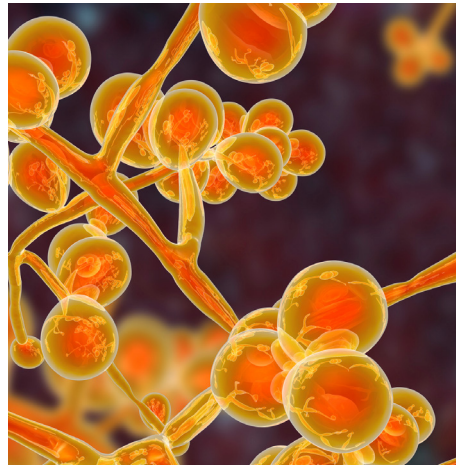
One of the side effects of this type of medication is thrush



## ➤ WHAT IS THRUSH AND WHY MAY I BE AT RISK OF DEVELOPING IT?

Fungal organisms such as yeasts thrive in warm, damp, sugary conditions. In someone with type 2 diabetes, when the glucose levels are too high, glucose will spill into the urine from the blood. The medical term for this is glycosuria.

Small amounts of glucose may be left on the skin after urinating. Fungal organisms which are normally on your skin can grow more quickly than usual in your genital area because it is warm, damp, and sugary. This causes an infection called *Candida Albicans* or more commonly known as thrush.



## > SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS:

**Women** may notice some of the following:

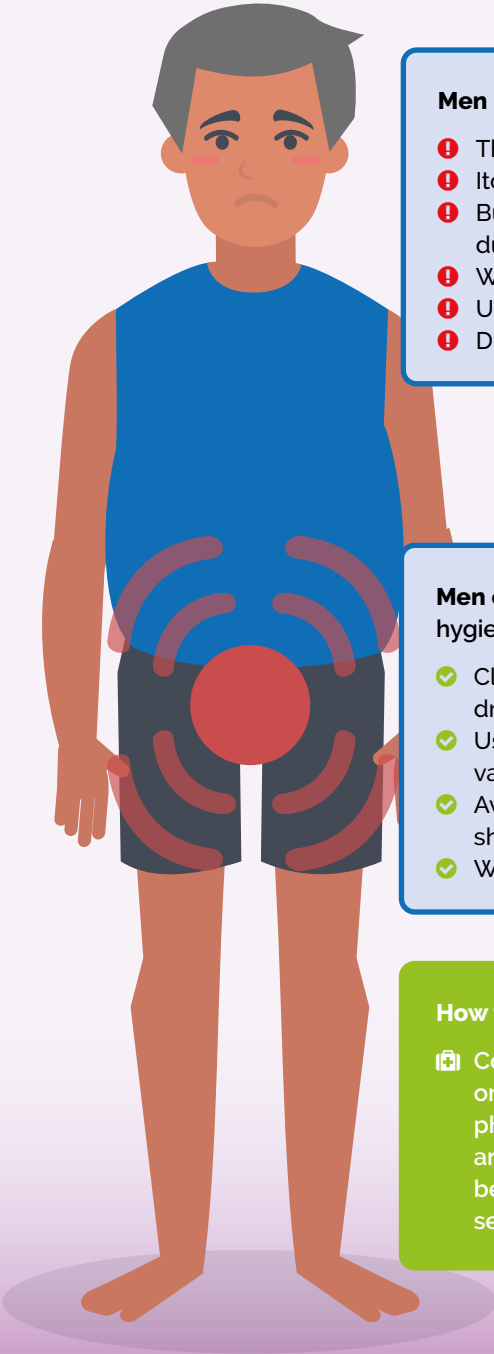
- ❗ Itchy vagina and vulva
- ❗ Soreness around the entrance to the vagina
- ❗ White "cottage-cheese"-like discharge
- ❗ Redness and swelling
- ❗ Cracked skin around the vulva
- ❗ Pain when urinating or during sex

## > HOW TO REDUCE YOUR RISK:

**Women** can reduce their risk by good genital hygiene, and:

- ✓ Avoiding the use of deodorants and perfumed products in and around your intimate area
- ✓ Avoiding high-sugar foods
- ✓ If you are taking antibiotics, consult your doctor before taking thrush treatments
- ✓ Changing your tampons or pant-liners frequently
- ✓ Ensuring you wipe from front to back after going to the toilet
- ✓ Changing your underwear after swimming and working out
- ✓ Avoiding very hot baths
- ✓ Checking between your legs with a mirror if you feel "different"





**Men may notice some of the following:**

- ❗ The head of the penis is red
- ❗ Itching
- ❗ Burning sensation when passing urine or during sexual intercourse
- ❗ White "cottage-cheese"-like discharge
- ❗ Unpleasant smell
- ❗ Difficulty pulling back the foreskin

**Men can reduce their risk by good genital hygiene, and:**

- ✔ Cleaning your penis after passing urine and drying it properly
- ✔ Using a condom if your partner has vaginal thrush
- ✔ Avoiding the use of perfumed soaps and shower gels
- ✔ Wearing loose fitting underwear

**How to treat for both women and men:**

- 📦 Combination treatment (cream and pessary, or cream and tablet) from your local pharmacist or GP is usually effective. If you are sexually active, your partner should also be treated (but thrush is not classed as a sexually-transmitted disease)



### ➤ WHEN TO SEEK HELP:

You should see your GP in the following circumstances:

- You have frequent episodes of thrush
- Thrush returns in less than 2 months after treatment
- There is no improvement with treatment after 3 days
- It has still not gone after 7 days
- You develop a fever, chills, feel nauseated or are vomiting, have abdominal pain, have a smelly unusual discharge
- You develop thrush but have had a previous allergic reaction to thrush medication



## > SUMMARY:

- i** Your new medication can help you to control your glucose levels and lose some weight, and is taken just once daily.
- i** It works by moving some excess glucose from your blood into your urine, where it is removed from your body.
- i** Glucose in urine may make you more at risk of developing a genital fungal infection called thrush. This is usually easily treated.
- i** Good genital hygiene is important.



## > USEFUL RESOURCES:

Trend Diabetes: [www.trenddiabetes.online](http://www.trenddiabetes.online)

Diabetes UK: [www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)

Diabetes UK: ☎ 0345 123 2399

NHS: [www.nhs.uk/conditions/thrush-in-men-and-women/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/thrush-in-men-and-women/)



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