

Candida Albicans – How It May Affect Your Health

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Candida albicans is a very pervasive yeast. While normally harmless, if your immune system becomes disrupted from exposure to antibiotics, poor diet or lack of sleep, Candida can begin to grow out of control
- › Common signs and symptoms of Candida overgrowth include white coating on your tongue, sudden development of food sensitivities, aches and pains, gut problems, persistent fatigue, skin problems and vaginitis
- › The remedy is simple: Implement a lifestyle that boosts immune function. Eat a low net-carb, high-fiber diet to nourish beneficial bacteria while suppressing opportunistic fungi like Candida that feed on sugar

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If you're not optimally healthy, could Candida be at fault? In this interview, the late British osteopath and naturopath, Dr. Leon Chaitow, author of "[Candida Albicans: Natural Remedies for Yeast Infection](#)," discusses its dangers – and more importantly, how to address this exceedingly common infection.

Trained in Great Britain, Chaitow had a medical practice in the U.K. for about 30 years before moving to Greece, where he resided and focused on his writing until he passed in September 2018 after several months of failing health.¹

"In the mid-1980s, I began to notice an increase in the number of patients who were coming to me with ... digestive gut problems ... yeast-related illnesses ...

skin problems ... vaginitis [and] fatigue ...

I was really concerned about what was producing this change in my patient population," Chaitow says. "It was [at] that time that I came across Dr. Crook's book, 'The Yeast Connection' [and] began to understand what I was dealing with."

As his investigation continued, which ultimately culminated in the publication of his book in 1985, he began to see links between chronic fatigue, chronic pain problems and fibromyalgia-type symptoms.

Crook's book was instrumental in my natural health journey as well. I read his book in 1985 — the same year I finished my family practice residency and set up my own medical practice.

Sadly, I was brainwashed into the pharmacological model hook, line and sinker, but I read his book, as like most physicians, I had patients exhibiting these symptoms. I tried Crook's approach. But because I was so brainwashed, I thought the primary focus was to kill the yeast, so I prescribed antifungals and never addressed the diet. Guess what? No surprise; it never worked.

Fast-forward six or seven years. I now had yet another patient, a young child, presenting with chronic diarrhea, signs of autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), along with the classic signs for Candida presented in Crook's book.

This time I had grown wiser and decided to include the dietary interventions he prescribed, and lo and behold, it worked like a charm. This really opened my eyes and got me started down the path of nutritional medicine.

What Is Candida, and How Does It Become a Problem?

Candida albicans is a very pervasive **yeast**. Most everyone watching this has it in their system, and for most, it poses no problem at all. However, if your immune system

becomes disrupted from exposure to antibiotics, poor diet or lack of sleep, for example, Candida can begin to grow out of control.

"The issue seems to be a mixture between modern lifestyle and diet," Chaitow says. "It can be a range of features that [suggests] some degree of immune suppression; not in the extreme sense, but simply not functioning well enough ... The issues seem to initially start in the gut ..."

It seems the change in the gut flora – which can be the result of antibiotics; it can also simply be nutritional (high-sugar diet, high refined carbohydrates) factor – leads to this change in gut behavior where the yeast can change. The normal flora of the gut produce biotin. That's in a normal healthy flora.

The biotin suppresses the ability of yeast to change into a more aggressive mycelial form, where it can actually put down little rootlets [and] penetrate the gut mucus membrane, starting a process where we start to absorb toxins from the gut, and we start getting sensitivity allergic-type symptoms bodywide.

It can be pain. It can be fatigue. It can be many other things. The change in the normal flora seems to be the key to correcting the problem, because they normally keep yeast under control. Yeast is there, but it's not aggressive. Once we lose the functionality of the normal gut flora, the problems accelerate."

Signs and Symptoms of Candida

One major (and clearly visible) clinical symptom of Candida is a white coating on your tongue. When your microbial balance is normal, your tongue is typically clean and pink. Other common symptoms suggesting Candida has gotten the upper hand include:

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| Sudden development of food sensitivities | Unusual aches and pains that do not appear to have a determinable cause (such as an injury) |
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Gut problems, such as bloating, constipation or diarrhea

Unnatural, persistent fatigue

Odd skin issues, such as dry patches

Vaginitis (inflammation of the genital area in women)

Interestingly, Chaitow also discovered that Candida symptoms have many commonalities with symptoms related to improper breathing. He spent over a decade studying the biochemical effects of breathing dysfunction, which is also extremely common, and many of them are identical to yeast problems.

"I began to see how young women with yeast-related problems [also] had upper chest breathing patterns. It's extremely common in women to have that," he says.

"These breathing pattern disorders were leading to a range of symptoms, [including] gut symptoms (because smooth muscle constriction occurs when you're in a state of respiratory alkalosis or overbreathing) [and fatigue].

They were getting all the symptoms that I thought were yeast related. Many of the yeast-type problems are compounded [or] aggravated by common breathing pattern disorders. Not pathology, simply dysfunction ...

They're not related [but] very similar symptoms can emerge from both directions. Sometimes they're both happening and you're only dealing with one. The ideal is to deal with lifestyle, which would include enhanced breathing patterns and the dietary side.

The problem is if you only focus on the diet and the obvious yeast overgrowth, and you don't deal with what might be treading into it from what is an extremely common problem, you miss a part of the story."

One of the best ways to address any breathing dysfunction you may have is to familiarize yourself with the Buteyko Breathing Technique.

Breathing is typically ignored when it comes to health, yet breathing properly can improve oxygenation through your body, including your brain, and is a powerful strategy for relieving stress and anxiety – mental factors that can have an adverse effect on your physical health if left unaddressed.

How to Control Candida

In order to control the Candida yeast – which is typically part of your normal flora; not necessarily a pathogen but rather an opportunistic "parasitic" infection – you want to starve it, thereby suppressing it naturally rather than killing it outright.

Candida can be viewed as a free-loader that takes advantage of your mistakes when you fail to implement a proper lifestyle, or are exposed and buy into the medical paradigm that uses drugs as the go-to solution. Very frequently, these drugs – antibiotics, steroid hormones and oral contraceptives, for example – will change your internal environment, predisposing Candida to grow into an invasive form of infection that can cause serious problems.

"The formula I try to have as an overarching approach to all these chronic problems is to try and simplify it to enhance immune function, whichever way you can; reduce the adoptive load that you're imposing to the system. It can be just better lifestyle, better sleep, more exercise and improved, enhanced diet.

Stop feeding the yeast, stop damaging your immune function, and replenish the gut flora as best possible," Chaitow says. "The yeast, controlled, takes care of itself. You don't have to kill it ... We have this natural wonderful symbiosis with our gut flora. It keeps us alive. It keeps us healthy. But if we damage it, we pay the price."

Avoiding Antibiotics and Optimizing Your Diet Are Key

Avoiding antibiotics is one important prevention strategy. Only take them if your life depends on it. Also avoid antibiotics in your food. This means avoiding foods from

animals raised in concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), as most are routinely fed low-dose antibiotics to counteract poor sanitation and crowded living conditions, and to boost growth.

As much as 80% of the antibiotics used in the United States are used in agriculture, so it's a significant source of exposure. Also avoid unnecessary hormones, such as contraceptives, and sugar. Ideally, your diet should be low in net carbs, high in high-quality fats and moderate in protein. As noted by Chaitow:

"The diet is the key. The diet needs to be as unprocessed as possible ... The Mediterranean Diet is the ideal one. It's fish (not farmed fish if possible) [and] lean meat ... The agricultural industry is the main user of antibiotics [so] that's where we're most at risk ... Vegetables, fruits – not too much of the very sweet fruits at the beginning of the anti-Candida program, but certainly fruits like papaya are wonderful.

The avoidance of anything that is going to provoke fermentation. Sugar is key to avoid. At the beginning, that even covers things like honey in the first month or two of an anti-Candida program. I think it's quite a simple process. It's healthy lifestyle, healthy diet.

The program has to be coupled initially by trying to encourage more normal gut flora. We go straight into the prebiotics and probiotics. That needs to be accompanied by change in diet and avoiding antibiotics wherever possible."

When Might You Need Drug Therapy?

In his book, Crook recommends Nystatin, an antifungal drug that is available as a powder or tablets. It's a relatively benign drug with few side effects. Still, while it may be necessary in extreme cases, Chaitow avoids antifungals unless the condition is not improving at a reasonable rate. Diflucan is a type of antibiotic that may also be prescribed if all else fails.

"Use [drugs] only as a fallback position," Chaitow recommends. "Over the years, that has proved adequate if people have the patience. There are issues about cost here, because sometimes, a comprehensive antifungal program becomes somewhat expensive. You've got a number of nutrients, probiotics and so on to buy.

Some of the food is more expensive if you're buying organic meat rather than the normal processed meat and so on. I think people have to compromise at times.

I think using antifungals, unless there's an extreme fungal infection that demands a rapid resolution, and as an economic imperative, I would try to think of it as, not last resort, but certainly second resort. Primary is diet, lifestyle and the associated probiotics. There are many botanical, herbal-type products, which can assist in that process. I'm not sold on always or even 50 percent of the time using medication."

Fermented Foods Are a Great Source of Probiotics

High-quality probiotic supplements can indeed be pricey, but you can easily slash your bill by using homemade fermented vegetables instead. I personally don't take any probiotics. I use high-quality fermented vegetables, which contain FAR more viable beneficial organisms than commercial probiotics do. Chaitow also recommends using prebiotic fructo-oligosaccharides (FOS), which help enhance the functionality of normal gut flora and can be taken as a powder.

"I absolutely agree that fermented foods are the ideal," he says. "[But] it's sometimes a shift too far for people in the early stages. That's completely outside of their culture. It's something that I try to introduce when I can ... The more complicated it is, the more expensive it is, the more difficult it is, the less likely you're going to have compliance.

If you lose your patient because they just find that it's too much, either too expensive, too complicated or too unpleasant, you've not gained anything. It's about simplicity for me. I use the prebiotics [and] probiotics that come in a simple, easy form to take."

A drawback of FOS is that it could potentially lead to bacterial overgrowth in your small intestine. It's extremely rare, but it has been known to occur. A more natural approach to get more prebiotics is simply to eat more high-fiber foods. There are nutritional trackers – [chronometer.com/mercola](https://www.chronometer.com/mercola) is my favorite – that will tell you how many grams of fiber you're getting. Try to get above 40-70 grams of fiber a day.

You may not be able to do that unless you use a fiber supplement like chia seeds, which is a whole food, or organic psyllium husk. (Make sure it's organic, as psyllium is frequently grown and contaminated with large amounts of pesticides.) I take about 3 tablespoons of each per day, which is how I can get my daily fiber intake up to 80 grams.

The fiber acts as a magnificent substrate to nourish healthy bacteria, which can actually double every 20 minutes or so when they get the nutrients they need.

Useful Supplements

Interestingly, the list of supplements Chaitow recommends against Candida is almost identical to the ones known to improve mitochondrial health, which is a clear win-win!

These include:

- **Caprylic acid**, a medium-chain triglyceride (MCT) with eight carbons (which is why it's also known as C8). While it's found in coconut oil, you can also buy MCT oil, either straight C8 or in combination with capric acid (C10). No other food source converts to ketones more readily than C8, and ketones are a magnificent, efficient fuel for your body. Caprylic acid is also a potent antifungal, and Chaitow recommends it in lieu of antifungal drugs.
- **Berberine**, the main active ingredient in goldenseal, has antibacterial, anti-inflammatory and immune-enhancing properties. It is also very effective in

assisting mitochondrial functions.

- **Echinacea**, which helps support a healthy immune system, also has antibacterial and antibiotic properties.
- **Aloe** contains a mucopolysaccharide with powerful immune benefits. It also benefits your mitochondria. I grow about 300 aloe plants in my front yard, and I add two large aloe leaves to my smoothie each day.

More Information

If you're not leading a particularly healthy lifestyle and recognize your symptoms in the list above, there's a good chance that Candida, which is present in all of us, may have taken up too much real estate.

Chaitow's book, "[Candida Albicans: Natural Remedies for Yeast Infection](#)" lays out a comprehensive lifestyle approach to address the problem. You can also find more information on his website, [LeonChaitow.com, which his daughter now maintains](#). At the end of the day, Candida need not affect you. You always have it, but as long as you care for your gut with a low-net-carb, high-fiber diet, this opportunistic fungus won't cause you any grief.

Sources and References

- ¹ [Mortonsfoot.com](#)