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Health: best treatments

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Treatments for oral thrush in children

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The treatment normally used for oral thrush is **antifungal medicine**. There is good research showing that this treatment works in babies and children. It is used to treat children who have thrush already, and also for prevention.

Antifungals to treat oral thrush

Antifungal drugs used to treat existing oral thrush include:

Fluconazole liquid (brand name Diflucan) to swirl around your mouth and swallow
Miconazole gel (Daktarin) to smear on infected places in your mouth
Nystatin liquid (Nystan) that you swirl around your mouth.

There has been some good research to show that these medicines work. One large study found that nearly all the children with oral thrush who were otherwise healthy got rid of the infection after using miconazole gel for 12 days.^[1] Only half of those who used nystatin liquid were cured.

In another study, all the babies treated with fluconazole liquid were cured after seven days.^[2] Out of those treated with nystatin, only a third were cured.

Another large study looked at children who had oral thrush because their immune system wasn't working properly. It found that 9 in 10 children were cured after being treated with fluconazole liquid.^[3] Half of those treated with nystatin liquid were cured.

In studies, the most common side effects of antifungal medicines were vomiting and diarrhoea. But fewer than 5 in 100 children got these problems.^[4] ^[1]

Antifungals to prevent oral thrush

The best treatment to prevent oral thrush in children who have a weak immune system seems to be a drug called fluconazole (Diflucan). This comes as an orange-flavoured liquid that children swirl in their mouth and then swallow. Fluconazole can also be

given as tablets or through a tube directly into the vein (drip).

One large study of more than 500 children aged six months to 17 years, whose immune system wasn't working properly, found:[5]

About 1 in 100 children who took fluconazole got mouth thrush

About 6 in 100 who took the antifungal medicines nystatin or amphotericin (brand name Fungilin, Fungizone) (or both) got oral thrush.

These medicines can have side effects, such as an upset stomach.

In one study, 3 in 100 children who took fluconazole stopped treatment because of side effects.[5]

About 1 in 100 children who took nystatin or amphotericin stopped treatment.[5]

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