

Candida Albicans

Candida albicans is a fungus that causes opportunistic oral infections and genital infections in humans. When cultured in standard yeast medium at 20 degrees Celsius, *C. albicans* grows as yeast cells and can undergo a morphological shift to pseudohyphal growth with mild environmental changes in temperature and pH. At 37 degrees, *Candida albicans* demonstrates germ tube formation, which is an outgrowth produced by spores during germination. The germ tube differentiates and grows to create hyphae. Evidence of germ tube formation is strongly indicative of *Candida albicans*. This organism is a normal constituent of oral and gut flora and causes disease when there is overgrowth of the fungus. It can cause esophageal thrush in the immunocompromised and is a very common cause of vaginitis. Infection of the vagina can cause intense, itching, burning, and irritation and a whitish cottage cheese-like discharge. This fungus can also cause diaper rash and has the potential to cause endocarditis, especially in IV drug users.



PLAY PICMONIC

Fungi

Fun-guy

Candida albicans is a fungus that causes opportunistic oral and genital infections in humans.

Yeast with Pseudohyphae at 20 Degrees C

Sumo-hyphae at 20 Degrees

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Germ Tube Formation at 37 Degrees C

Germinating Tube at 37°C

At 37 degrees, *Candida albicans* demonstrates germ tube formation, which is an outgrowth produced by spores during germination. The germ tube differentiates and grows to create hyphae. Evidence of germ tube formation is strongly indicative of *Candida albicans*.

Pruritic Vaginitis

Prairie-dog and Vagina-violet

Infection of the vagina can cause intense itching, burning, and irritation.

White Cottage Cheese Discharge

Cottage Cheese

Infection of the vagina can cause a characteristic whitish cottage cheese-like discharge.

Fiery Red Mucosa

Fiery Flower Pedals

Irritation of the vaginal mucosa often causes a fiery red appearance of the mucosal tissue.

Diabetics

Dyed-beads Pancreas

Diabetes mellitus is characterized by elevated blood sugar levels and can make a patient more susceptible to *C. albicans* infections as the organisms thrive due to the elevated blood sugar levels and the immune system being partially compromised.

Antibiotic Use

[ABX-guy](#)

Prolonged antibiotic use is a risk factor for *C. albicans* infections as the normal flora is wiped out, allowing *C. albicans* to overgrow.

Esophageal Thrush in Immunocompromised

[Sarcophagus Trash with Band-AIDS](#)

Overgrowth of *C. albicans* in the esophagus causes esophageal thrush and only occurs in patients in immunocompromised states. Patients typically present with painful swallowing.

Diaper Rash

[Diaper with Rash Examined by Dermatologist](#)

Diaper rash is a rash in the diaper area and can be caused by *C. albicans*.

Endocarditis in IV Drug Users

[Donut-heart-card with IV-drug-use](#)

Endocarditis refers to inflammation of the lining of the heart chambers and heart valves. Although rare, *C. albicans* can cause infective endocarditis when introduced into the bloodstream. This manifestation can be seen in IV drug abusers.