

Candida

(*Candida albicans*)

Candida is one of only a few allergenic extracts representing the yeast group of molds. Candida is a common mold found in the soil as well as in decaying organic debris. Candida naturally occurs on and in the human body – on your skin, on many mucous membranes and in the gut. Normally innocuous, it is considered an opportunistic pathogen in that a disruption of the skin/membrane, or an imbalance of the body's protective barriers, can lead to infection. For the purpose of this information page, we will limit our discussion to the allergic disease potential of Candida.

The role of Candida as a trigger for inhalant allergy has been argued for decades. Clearly there is Candida-specific IgE (indicating allergic disease potential) in patients with asthma and allergic rhinitis. While it has almost universal distribution, it seldom becomes airborne. Further, Candida has the ability to interact with our immune systems in many ways, which only serves to make cause-effect all the more complex. Major protein allergens have been studied, and one of these allergens elicited a positive skin test reaction in 10 of 13 atopic pediatric patients. Another study looked at 85 asthmatic patients compared to 70 non-allergic patients. In the asthmatic patients, the positive skin test reactivity rate to Candida was 54.1%; the non-allergic group had a reaction rate of 4.3%, so clearly there appears to be good reason to include Candida in a thorough allergy testing regimen.

