



FIGURE 19-5: Oral candidiasis (thrush).



### CRITICAL THINKING

Why is it important to cook chicken, beef, pork, and fish thoroughly?

## Medications to Induce Vomiting and Treat Drug Overdose

Some medications are used to induce vomiting to rid the body of a harmful substance or toxin. Vomiting may or may not be beneficial, depending on the circumstance. If caused by food poisoning, vomiting is therapeutic because it helps rid the body of toxins. Antiemetics stop vomiting, and emetics promote it. Emetics, such as syrup of ipecac, induce vomiting in 80% to 90% of patients within 20 to 30 minutes. Syrup of ipecac has been widely used to induce vomiting in poisoning incidents outside the hospital. Now, however, parents are advised to destroy any syrup of ipecac that they have in the home because the benefits are inconclusive, and it may be dangerous. For instance, if it is given when a corrosive substance has been ingested, the substance will cause further damage when it is brought back up. Most poisonings and drug overdoses are treated with activated charcoal. Charcoal attracts the toxin and inactivates the poison as it travels the length of the GI tract in most instances. The poison is then excreted in the stool. Always call poison control anywhere in the United States at 1-800-222-1222 to receive the most current recommendations before acting to prevent further injury to a patient.

Because of the increase in drug overdoses in the United States, naloxone (Narcan) is becoming a standard medication available to many police departments and schools as well as EMS. Narcan blocks the effects of opioids and thus can reverse an overdose. It comes in a nasal spray for use outside of a medical facility as well as an injectable form that can be given as an injection or as a continuous IV drip.

## Nutritional Supplements

Poor nutrition can result in poor health. Malnutrition can be caused by lack of availability of food, excessive dieting, poor dietary choices, or illnesses that reduce appetite. Medications that reduce nausea and vomiting can improve nutritional status. Furthermore, nutritional supplements such as a multivitamin can compensate for a lack of vitamins in food.

Nutritional supplements may not sound like drugs, but they are frequently prescribed to improve nutrition in patients who are malnourished. These supplements are more easily tolerated in a patient who is weak and possibly has a compromised immune system. Liquid nutritional supplements can help improve health. Examples include Boost and Ensure. Store brands are available, but be sure to ask the prescriber whether substitutions are allowed. Some prescribers want specific nutrients found only in certain supplements. The patient can usually choose the flavor of the supplement, however.

## Digestants

In some instances, patients have difficulty digesting the food that they eat, most commonly because of a food allergy or possibly a genetic disorder such as cystic fibrosis. If a patient has no medical reason