



Good vulval care



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Clothing and laundry

- Wear all white cotton underwear and loose fitting pants or skirts
- Do not wear pantyhose (wear thigh or knee high hose instead)
- Ensure underwear and any clothing that comes into contact with the vulva is rinsed well
- Do not use fabric softener on undergarments.

Hygiene

- Do not over wash the genitals. Treat the skin of the genital tract very gently
- Do not use douches (ie. washing internally)
- While you have symptoms, do not use soap for washing. Alternatives include: Cetaphil cleanser, Dermaveen, Hamilton QV wash, saline solution: 2 tsp salt to 1 L of water
- When symptoms have resolved, plain water is sufficient for hygiene purposes
- Use soft, white, unscented toilet paper
- Use lukewarm or cool salt baths (saline solution) to relieve burning and irritation
- Avoid getting shampoo on the vulval area
- Do not use bubblebath, feminine hygiene products, or any perfumed creams or soaps
- Urinate before the bladder is full and rinse the vulva with water after urination
- Use 100% cotton menstrual pads and tampons.

Sexual intercourse

- Do not use lubricants such as 'KY' jelly or petroleum jelly. Plain vegetable oil is fine. Be careful though, as it may cause small holes in condoms
- Do not have intercourse when you are feeling symptoms of pain in the genitals
- Do not have intercourse when you are not prepared
- Apply ice or a frozen gel pack wrapped in a towel to relieve burning after intercourse
- Urinate (to prevent infection) and rinse vulva with cool water after intercourse.

Physical activities

- Avoid exercises that put direct pressure on the vulva, eg. bicycle and horseback riding
- Limit intense exercises that create a lot of friction in the vulva area (try lower intensity exercises such as walking)
- Use a frozen gel pack wrapped in a towel to relieve symptoms after exercise
- Enrol in an exercise class such as yoga to learn stretching and relaxation exercises
- Don't swim in highly chlorinated pools and avoid the use of hot tubs
- Remove wet bathing suits and exercise clothing promptly.

Everyday living

- Use a foam rubber ring for long periods of sitting
- If you sit all day, try to intersperse periods of standing.

Medications

- Only use prescribed medications on the genitals
- If a flare-up of symptoms occurs, a swab (looking for thrush or other infection) must be taken before any medication is prescribed or used.

REMEMBER

Genital skin is very sensitive and needs protection from chemical and physical damage. Try not to scratch the skin if it feels itchy. The genital area is also affected by the way you feel and symptoms can appear worse at times of stress. Do not treat any symptoms yourself without seeing a doctor.

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