



Mercy Health
Care first

Your important health information

Good vulval skin care

Here are some helpful tips on caring for your vulva. It is for patients who have vulval skin conditions.

Clothing and laundry

- Wear cotton underwear and loose-fitting pants or skirts.
- Avoid pantyhose, leggings, or tights.
- Ensure your underwear is rinsed well after washing and avoid using fabric softener.

Hygiene and bathroom habits

- Shower daily using water only.
- For relief of itching, pain or burning, try a lukewarm or cool salt bath.
- For a bath, add one cup of table salt.
- To spray the vulva, use a spray bottle of water with a teaspoon of salt
- Dry the area with a soft towel or hair dryer on the cool setting. Make sure the area is dried properly. Do not rub the area to dry.
- Do not use bubble bath, feminine wash products, or any perfumed creams or soaps.
- Never use talcum powder on your vulva.
- Use 100% cotton sanitary pads or tampons. If possible use tampons and avoid panty liners.

Sexual intercourse or sex

- Always use natural lubricants when having sexual intercourse.
- Avoid artificial lubricants such as 'KY jelly' or petroleum jelly (Vaseline). Plain vegetable oil is fine. Be careful as oil based lubricants may weaken condoms. If using condoms use Sylk lubricant.
- Avoid sex when you have symptoms.
- Always urinate and rinse your vulva with cool water after sex. This will help prevent infections.
- If you have pain after sex, try using a small ice pack wrapped in a towel and apply to the area.

Physical activities

- Limit exercises that put direct pressure on the vulva. This may include bike riding or horse riding.
- Remove wet bathing suits and exercise clothing straight away after use
- Use a frozen gel pack wrapped in a towel to help symptoms after exercise.
- Avoid public swimming pools. Avoid the use of hot tubs. Swim in the sea if possible.

Everyday living

- Avoid sitting for long periods.

Important points on medication

- Only use prescribed medication on the vulva
- If symptoms get worse, your doctor will need to take a swab. This must be done before any medication is used.

Points to remember

- Genital skin is very sensitive. It needs protection from damage.
- Try not to scratch the skin as this can lead to infection and skin damage.
- The genital area is also affected by the way you feel. Symptoms can appear worse at times of stress.
- Do not treat any symptoms yourself without seeing your doctor for advice.

Further Information

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact:

Mercy Hospital for Women

Department of Gynaecological Oncology

Phone: 03 8458 4880

Afterhours: 03 8458 4853 Ward 6 (24 hours)

Acknowledgements

Produced by: Department of Gynaecological Oncology MHW

Date produced: June 2014

Date of last review: September 2021

Date for review: August 2024