

Gynaecology Department

General care of vulval skin and avoiding potential irritants

Washing

- Washing with water only causes dry skin and can make any itching worse. Use a soap substitute to clean the vulval area. Use a small amount of emollient cream or ointment your doctor has prescribed or suggested with water to wash your skin. This will stop the skin from getting as dry and irritated as it would if you used soap or water alone. The cream/ointment is safe to use frequently.
- Shower rather than bathe and clean the vulval area only once a day. Over cleaning can aggravate vulval symptoms. If you use a bath, it is helpful to use a bath emollient.
- Avoid using sponges or flannels to wash the vulva. These can irritate your skin. Instead, wash your vulva using aqueous cream, emollient or another soap substitute with just your hand. Gently dab the vulval area dry with a soft towel or use a hairdryer on a **cool** setting held well away from the skin.
- Avoid soaps, shower gels, scrubs, bubble baths, deodorants, baby wipes or douches in the vulval area.

Wearing

- Wear loose fitting silk or cotton underwear. Close fitting clothes such as tights, cycling shorts, leggings or tight jeans should be avoided. Wear loose fitting trousers or skirts and replace tights with stockings. At home, you may find it more comfortable to wear long skirts or casual trousers without underwear.
- Sleep without underwear.
- Avoid wearing panty liners or sanitary towels on a regular basis.
- Wear white or light colours of underwear. Dark textile dyes (black/navy) may cause an allergy; if you wash new dark underwear a few times before wearing, it will be less likely to cause a problem.
- Avoid fabric conditioners and biological washing powders. You may want to wash your underwear separately in a non-biological washing power/liquid.

Products

- Some over the counter creams including baby or nappy creams, herbal creams (e.g. tea-tree oil, aloe vera) and thrush treatments may include possible irritants.
- Avoid antiseptic (as a cream or added to bath water) in the vulval area.
- Avoid coloured toilet paper.
- Avoid wearing nail varnish on finger nails if you tend to scratch your skin.

Use of emollients to protect your skin

- Emollients can be used as moisturisers throughout the day. These products can be bought in large or smaller quantities over the counter or on prescription from a doctor in clinic or your G.P. Emollient preparations contained in tubs should be removed with a clean spoon or spatula to reduce bacterial contamination of the emollient.
- Emollient soap substitutes do not foam but are just as effective at cleaning the skin as soap. Soap substitutes can either be applied before bathing, showering or washing, or while in the water.
- Using one of these moisturisers every day can help relieve symptoms. Even when you do not have symptoms, using a moisturiser will protect the skin and can prevent flare-ups.
- It is important to find the moisturiser that suits you best. If the first one you try does not work well, it is well worth trying another one.
- Recent research has raised concerns regarding the use of Aqueous cream for skin conditions. The National Eczema Society have reported that aqueous cream may be associated with skin reactions, such as burning, stinging, itching and redness, when used as a leave-on emollient but not when used as a wash product.

Commonly used emollients

Zerobase Diprobase E45 Cetraben Oilatum

There are many others to try, ask your pharmacy for advice.

Further information is available at;

www.nhs.uk/conditions/emollients/pages/introduction.aspx

www.eczema.org/emollients

References

MHRA Drug Safety Update 2013

British National Formulary

BASHH 2014 UK National Guidelines on the Management of Vulval Conditions

RCOG Green-top guideline No.58

RCOG patient information 'Skin Conditions of the Vulva'

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

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01422 222667

www.cht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce,
obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych
informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej,
prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww.
danych kontaktowych

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ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور فارمیٹ کی زبان میں درکار ہوں، تو
برائے مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

"إذا احتجت الحصول على هذه المعلومة بشكل مغاير أو مترجمة إلى لغة مختلفة فيرجى منك الاتصال بالقسم
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