Vulvar Skin Care Tips
Vulvar Skin Care Tips

Women often try hard to clean themselves and avoid infection. They may do things that make itching and irritation worse without meaning to. Here are some ideas to help with symptoms and prevent further irritation.

What can I do to feel better?

Hygiene

• Wash the vulva (area around the vagina) no more than once a day. Use water only. Do not use a washcloth, only soft fingertips. Pat the area dry with a soft towel. Do not rub vigorously. Put on underwear after the vulva is dry.

• Use a fan or a hair dryer on the cool setting to help dry the vulva.

• Avoid baby wipes.

• Avoid soap, douches, powders, products with alcohol, and over-the-counter medications. Avoid using Vagisil® (or other products which have benzocaine) on this area. If you feel you must use soap, use Dove unscented bar soap only.

• For vulvar or perianal (area directly between vulva and anus) dryness, use Prevex® (plain) or Vaseline® petroleum jelly.
• For vaginal dryness, use Replens® 2 nights each week.
• Do not shave your genital hair. This can cause skin irritation.
• Use unscented tampons during your periods rather than pads if possible.
• Do not use panty liners. If you have a lot of discharge or tend to wet (pee) yourself when laughing, sneezing, or running, use incontinence pads (such as Poise® or Tena®).
• Use white, unscented toilet paper only. Pat the area dry.
• Keep your fingernails cut short. Consider wearing cotton gloves at night to stop scratching.

Diet
• Drink plenty of fluids daily to keep your urine (pee) and vaginal discharge dilute (thinner).
• Prevent constipation by eating more fibre. An easy way is to have 1-2 large servings of a very high fibre cereal with 8-14 grams of fibre per serving. Drink at least one large glass of fluid at the same time. If necessary, use a psyllium product such as Metamucil™ with several large glasses of fluids each day.
Clothing

• Avoid tight clothing and synthetic fabrics, such as polyester or nylon.
• Consider not wearing underwear when at home. Let the vulvar area breathe as much as possible.
• Wear all cotton white underwear as dyes can irritate the area.
• Avoid pantyhose and tights. If you wear them, cut out the crotch area to allow better air circulation.
• Remove wet bathing suits and exercise clothing as soon as possible to prevent irritation.

Laundry

• Wash clothes in detergent that is “unscented”, “clear”, or “free” (such as Tide Free and Gentle™).
• Avoid fabric softener and dryer sheets such as Bounce®.
• If using a stain removal product, soak the clothes, then rinse in cold water before washing them in the regular wash cycle.
Controlling discomfort

• If prescribed cream or ointment gives any burning feeling, stop using it and call your doctor.

• Putting something cold wrapped in a soft towel near the area can help burning and itching. Try ice, frozen peas, cool packs, or a frozen gel pack.

• Be careful not to overdo this, since frostbite is a real possibility.

Sexual activity

• Use a lubricant (lube) with sexual activity. Women with vaginal symptoms tend to be dry. Astroglide®, Slippery Stuff® (www.slipperystufflubes.com), or vegetable oil (not K-Y Jelly®) are good choices for lubricant.

• If sexual activity is painful, try applying a lot of topical anesthetic (Xylocaine® or lidocaine – not Vagisil®) 30 minutes before.

• Contraceptive creams, spermicides, and latex condoms can be irritating and cause burning. Avoid them if possible.

• Using moisturizers with condoms can cause the condom to break. Do not use these together.
Appointments and questions
To confirm or reschedule a Clinic appointment, please call 902-473-6112. If you have any questions or concerns, call the Clinic.

Clinic Nurse
Phone: 902-473-4181
Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

If you have an EMERGENCY, call your family doctor, call 811 (Nova Scotia Telecare Service), or go to the closest Emergency Department.

If you have any questions, please ask.
We are here to help you.

Notes:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Colposcopy Clinic
5th Floor, Dickson Building
5820 University Avenue
Victoria General Hospital site
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 2Y9

Looking for more health information?
Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.
For more information go to http://library.novascotia.ca

Nova Scotia Health Authority promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.
Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!

Nova Scotia Health Authority
www.nshealth.ca

Prepared by: Colposcopy Clinic ©
Designed by: Nova Scotia Health Authority, Central Zone Patient Education Team
Printed by: Dalhousie University Print Centre

The information in this brochure is for informational and educational purposes only.
The information is not intended to be and does not constitute healthcare or medical advice.
If you have any questions, please ask your healthcare provider.

WP85-1513 Revised August 2015
The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.