



## Patient Information

## General Care of Vulval Skin

**Most women with a vulval disorder will benefit from advice on general care of vulval skin and avoiding potential irritants.**

- Washing with water only causes dry skin and makes itching worse. Use a soap substitute to clean the vulval area. Use a small amount of the cream or ointment 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 a bath and clean the vulval area only once a day. Over cleaning can aggravate vulval symptoms. If you have a bath, it is helpful to add a bath emollient.
- Avoid using sponges or flannels to wash the vulva. These can irritate your skin. Instead, wash your vulva using aqueous cream 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.
- 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 without underwear.
- Sleep without underwear.
- Avoid fabric conditioners and biological washing powders. You may want to wash your underwear separately in a non-biological washing powder/gel.
- Avoid soaps, shower gel, scrubs, bubble baths, deodorants, baby wipes or douches in the vulval area.
- Some over-the-counter creams including baby or nappy creams, herbal creams for example tea tree oil, aloe vera and 'thrush' treatments may include possible irritants.
- Avoid wearing panty liners or sanitary towels on a regular basis.



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- Avoid antiseptic (as a cream or added to bath water) in the vulval area
- 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, it will be less likely to cause a problem.
- 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. 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

If you have any questions about your appointment or need to change the date or time, please contact:

Booking Centre	01793 604820 Monday - Friday 8.30 - 17.00
Women's Health Outpatients	01793 605252 Monday - Friday 8.30 - 17.00
Gynaecology Reception	01793 604980 Monday - Friday 8.30 - 17.00

From 1st January 2019 smoking will not be permitted on any NHS site in England. Smoking will not be permitted within any of our buildings or anywhere outside on our sites. Smoking facilities will not be provided. Please be considerate of others when vaping in hospital grounds.

**This information sheet is available to order in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email [gwh.pals@nhs.net](mailto:gwh.pals@nhs.net)**

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