

General Vulva Care

While you are seeking effective treatment for Vulva problems, here are coping measures to relieve symptoms and prevent further irritation. Even when your symptoms are under control, these guidelines are recommended as a preventative strategy.

Hygiene:

- Use soft, white, unscented toilet paper.
- Use lukewarm or cool [Sitz](#) / tub baths with nothing in the water to relieve burning or irritation.
- Avoid getting shampoo in the vulva area.
- Do not use bubble baths, feminine products, powder, or any other perfumed creams or soaps. Two products that are recommended are [Cetaphil cleanser](#) or [Dove-Sensitive skin soap](#).
- Wash the vulva with cool to luke warm water only.
- Rinse the vulva with water after urination.
- Urinate before the bladder is full.
- Prevent constipation by
 - 1) adding fiber to your diet (if necessary, use a [Psyllium](#) product such as [Metamucil](#))
 - 2) drinking at least 8 glasses of water daily.
- Use 100-percent cotton menstrual pads and tampons such as "[Natracare Products](#)" (this is a full product line of menstrual products that are 100 percent cotton, chemical and additive free. Products can be found at Whole Food Market or online at: <http://www.natracare.com/>)
- Avoid daily use of panty lines. Change underwear as often as necessary to control wetness.

Clothing and Laundry:

- Wear all white cotton underwear.
- Do not wear pantyhose (wear thigh-high or knee-high hose instead).
- Remove wet bathing suits and exercise clothing promptly. Avoid exercise in tight synthetic clothes. Avoid thongs completely.
- Wear loose fitting pants and skirts. Take your underwear off when at home and go without underpants.
- Use dermatological approved detergents such as [Purex](#), or any detergents that state "free and clear" on the label. This statement means that there are no fragrances or dyes in the product.
- Double-rinse underwear and any other clothing that comes in contact with the vulva.
- Do not use bleach or fabric softener on undergarments.

Sexual Intercourse:

- Use a lubricant that is water soluble, e.g. [Astroglide](#), but be aware that it contains a preservative known as [Propylene Glycol](#) (P.G.) which some woman find irritating. A dab of cooking oil is fine if latex condoms are not used – it will break down the effectiveness of the condom.
- Ask your clinician for a prescription for a topical anesthetic, e.g. [Lidocaine ointment 5%](#) (not that this medication may sting for the first 3 -5 minutes after application).
- Apply a cool pack or cool gel pack wrapped in one layer of a hand towel to the vulva to relieve burning after intercourse. Frozen corn or peas in a small sealed plastic bag mold comfortably the vulva anatomy, but be sure to have a barrier between the vulva and the cold product.
- Urinate (to prevent infection) and rinse the vulva with cool water after sexual intercourse.

Physical Exercise:

- Avoid exercise that put direct pressure on the vulva such as bicycle riding and horse backing riding.
- Limit intense exercises that create a lot of friction in the vulva area (try lower intensity exercises such as walking).
- Use cool packs wrapped in a towel to relieve symptoms after exercise.
- Don't swim in highly chlorinated pools.
- Avoid the use of hot tubs.

Everyday living:

- Use a [foam rubber donut](#) for long periods of sitting.
- If you must sit at work, try to intersperse periods of standing (e.g. rearrange your office so that you can stand while you speak on the phone).
- Learn some relaxation techniques to do during the day ([The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook](#) by Davis, Eshelman and McKay or [The Chronic Pain Control Workbook](#) by Catalano and Hardin are recommended).