

**Vulvar Hygiene Guide**

Clothing and Laundry

* Wear all-white cotton underwear.
* Do not wear pantyhose (wear thigh high or knee-high hose instead).
* Wear loose-fitting pants or skirts.
* Remove wet bathing suits and exercise clothing promptly.
* Use unscented and dye-free detergent such as Purex or Clear.
* Double-rinse underwear and any other clothing that comes into contact with the vulva.
* Do not use fabric softener on undergarments.

Hygiene

* Use soft, white, unscented toilet paper.
* Use lukewarm or cool sitz baths to relieve burning and irritation.
* Avoid getting shampoo on the vulvar area.
* Do not use bubble bath, feminine hygiene products, or any perfumed creams or soaps.
* Wash the vulva with cool to lukewarm water only.
* Rinse the vulva with water after urination.
* Urinate before the bladder is full.
* Prevent constipation by adding fiber to your diet (if necessary, use a psyllium product such as Metamucil) and drinking at least 8 glasses of water daily.
* Use 100% cotton menstrual pads and tampons.

Sexual intercourse

* Use a water-based lubricant, eg, Astroglide or Aloe Cadabra
* Ask your physician for a prescription for a topical anesthestic, e.g., Lidocaine gel 5%. (This may sting for the first 3-5 minutes after application.)
* Apply ice or a frozen blue gel pack in one layer of a hand towel and apply to the vulva for 15 minutes to relieve burning after intercourse.
* Urinate (to prevent infection) and rinse vulva with cool water after sexual intercourse.
* Do not use contraceptive creams or spermicides.

Physical Activities

* Avoid exercises that put direct pressure on the vulva such as bicycle riding and horseback riding.
* Limit intense exercises that create a lot of friction in the vulvar area (try lower intensity exercises such as walking).
* Use a frozen gel pack wrapped in a clean thin towel or tee shirt to relieve symptoms after exercise.
* Enroll in an exercise class such as yoga to learn stretching and relaxation exercises.
* 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 all day at work, try to intersperse periods of standing (e.g. rearrange your office so that you can stand while you speak on the phone).
* Please talk with your OBGYN provider about Pelvic Floor Therapy.