

Key points to remember

Mild vulvovaginitis is a very common problem in young girls. It may recur now and then but will improve as your child gets older. In most mild cases, no treatment or tests are needed.

Additional hygiene information

- Do not over wash the area - treat skin of genital area very gently.
- Avoid **hot** baths.
- Avoid getting shampoo on the vulval area.
- When the symptoms have improved, washing with plain water may be enough for good hygiene.
- Urinate (pee) before the bladder is full, avoid 'hanging on' and rinse the vulva with water after urinating.
- Take care to wipe properly after passing stools (poos). In young girls it is important to wipe from front to back to prevent bugs getting onto the vulva.
- Use soft, white, unscented toilet paper.

Physical activities

- Avoid activities that put direct pressure on the vulva, such as riding a bicycle or horseback riding.
- Limit intense exercises that create a lot of friction in the vulval area but encourage exercises such as walking.
- Remove exercise clothing promptly.
- Use a soft cloth (soaked in a bowl with cool water and your soap substitute) and apply to the vulval area to help relieve the itch.
- Try to avoid swimming, otherwise remove wet swimwear promptly afterwards.
- Avoid long periods of sitting. Try standing or walking.

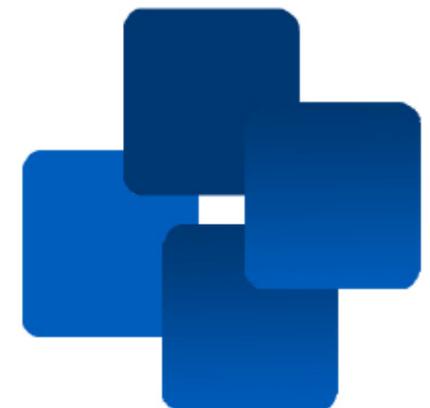
Reference - RCH Melbourne Aus.

Vulvovaginitis

Young Girls

Child Health

Parent Information Leaflet



Introduction

The purpose of this information leaflet is to advise on vulva skin care for young girls to manage the symptoms of vulvovaginitis (*pronounced: Vul-vo-vaj-ee-night-is*).

What is vulvovaginitis?

Vulvovaginitis is inflammation or irritation of the vagina and vulva (the opening of the vagina). Mild vulvovaginitis is a very common problem in young girls. It will affect most girls at some stage and some girls will have vulvovaginitis many times. As girls begin to develop breasts, their vulvovaginitis usually gets better. In most girls vulvovaginitis is not a serious problem and it will usually improve with simple steps. In most cases no treatment or tests are needed.

What are the signs and symptoms of vulvovaginitis?

Girls with vulvovaginitis often have the following symptoms:

- Itching in the vaginal area
- Some discharge from the vagina
- Redness of the skin between the labia majora (outside lips of the vagina)
- Burning or stinging when they pass urine

What causes vulvovaginitis?

The things that may cause vulvovaginitis are:

- Moisture / dampness around the vulva. This is made worse by tight clothing and obesity.
- Irritants such as soap residue, bubble baths, antiseptics etc.
- Threadworms sometimes cause or worsen vulvovaginitis. Children with threadworms often scratch a lot at night. If itching is a major symptom, your daughter's doctor may suggest you look for threadworms.

Treatment

In most mild cases, no treatment or tests are needed. In cases where it is troublesome the doctor may advise a swab of the area to be taken for testing, but the results are not always helpful. If your child has a more severe case of vulvovaginitis, blood stained discharge, or other skin problems, she may be referred to a paediatrician or other specialist for further management.

Care at home

Firstly, try not to worry. This is a common problem and a normal part of growing up for many girls. Try avoiding the things that make Vulvovaginitis worse:

- Wear loose cotton underwear and avoid tight trousers/jeans etc.
- Look at your child's weight and get some advice if she is overweight for her age and height.
- While there are symptoms, avoid using antiseptics in the bath and scented hygiene products such as feminine wipes, bubble bath and soap – an emollient is a good substitute for soap. Make sure it is rinsed well from the vulva.
- Some people find vinegar baths helpful - add 1/2 cup white vinegar to a shallow bath and soak for 10 to 15 minutes. Splash the vinegar bathwater vigorously around the area. Kicking the legs and doing "ballet" to encourage the legs to be opened wide and closed allows the water to flow deeper into the genital tract to help make the treatment more effective. Do this daily for a few days and see if it helps your daughter.
- Soothing creams (e.g. soft paraffin, Bepanthen) may help settle the soreness and waterproof and protect the skin from the discharge which can be irritating.

You may have to repeat these simple measures if the problem comes back.