

# BALANITIS

## WHAT IS IT?

Balanitis is inflammation of the glans (head) of the penis. The most common symptom of balanitis is a blotchy red rash, which may be itchy.

## WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?

Balanitis is not sexually transmitted. It results from an overgrowth of skin organisms which are normally present on the glans and under the foreskin. Balanitis is most common in uncircumcised men. The warm moist environment under the foreskin favours the growth of organisms that cause balanitis.

These organisms are especially likely to multiply and cause inflammation if they are allowed to accumulate under the foreskin in moist conditions. This may occur as a result of not washing, inadequate drying after washing, or sometimes after sex.

A yeast called *Candida albicans* is one of the most common causes of balanitis.

Candidal Balanitis in those over 40, can indicate underlying diabetes.

## TREATMENT AND PREVENTION

The aim of treatment is to keep the glans and foreskin clean and dry so that conditions under the foreskin are unfavourable for organisms to grow. Creams or ointments are rarely necessary, but antifungal creams can be used in *Candida albicans* infections.

At least once a day, during showering, the foreskin should be pulled back to expose the glans completely. The glans and foreskin should be washed gently using either water only or a soap-free wash such as Sorbolene and Glycerine Cream, Johnsons Baby Bath, QV Wash or Hamiltons Wash. These are available from pharmacies and supermarkets. Do not use soap.

After washing, dry the glans and foreskin thoroughly, by either exposing the glans to the air for 10 minutes, or by using a fan or hairdryer. After drying, replace the foreskin.

During urination, pull the foreskin back so that urine does not get under the foreskin and, after urination, dry the end of the penis and then replace the foreskin.

If you are prone to develop balanitis after sex, wash and dry the penis as described above shortly after having sex.

If you experience repeated attacks of balanitis despite adequate foreskin hygiene, or have difficulty pulling the foreskin back, you should consult your doctor.

This fact sheet is designed to provide you with information on Balantis. It is not intended to replace the need for a consultation with your doctor. All clients are strongly advised to check with their doctor about any specific questions or concerns they may have. Every effort has been taken to ensure that the information in this pamphlet is correct at the time of printing.