

GENITAL SKIN CARE

Almost all conditions of the genitals will benefit by simple changes to routine skin washing.

- avoid soap (see soap substitutes)
- keep to short, warm, not hot showers, and bathing. (too hot will increase itch, too long causes more dryness) plain or salt water (1/4 teaspoon/1 cup or 1-2 teaspoons/litre of pre boiled water). This is especially good if various creams and lotions have irritated the skin.

GENITAL FIRST AID

Salt water baths, 1 fistful in a shallow bath, soak for 10-15 minutes, 2-3 times per day (or 1/8000 potassium permanganate, using cotton balls or soft cloth). Use if the skin is split, ulcerated, weepy or tender and swollen. (If urination is very painful, try it in the bath, otherwise, coat the skin with zinc and castor oil or vaseline, then try).

Pat dry gently or use a cool setting of a hair dryer and apply the medication or moisturiser immediately afterwards.

*Bathing/soaking should usually stop after 3-4 days.
Excessive soaks can over dry the skin*

SOAP SUBSTITUTES

Soap substitutes can be used for otherwise intact but dry or irritated skin. Sorbolene cream is probably the cheapest and very effective.

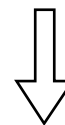
- avoid perfumed ones
- 10% glycerine occasionally causes stinging
- check it is the cream, not the lotion •apply before the area is wetted and rinse off lightly. A slight greasy film should remain

Aqueous cream is similar but sometimes causes an initial stinging. Both are excellent moisturisers to be applied any time and very soothing if applied cold (refrigerate).

Specific shower/bath lotions are more expensive but easier to apply. Avecyde, Cetaphil - rub over skin gently.

Bath oils can be used for very dry skin. Pat gently to dry. Don't rub it off. 1 cap/bath or rub over skin in the shower.

Less greasy



Hamilton's
QV
Alpha-keri
Emulsifying ointment

More greasy

If there is only minimal dryness, DOVE unscented 'soap' (or similar) is usually acceptable.

GENERAL DRY SKIN

Generally dry skin can be caused by:

- increasing age
- family tendency
- low humidity
- heaters/air conditioners
- baths/showers - too long, too often, too hot
- some diseases - diabetes, thyroid, kidney, liver

All of the previous advice can assist with dry skin and avoiding the following can also help:

- shampoo in the bath/ shower (over a basin is best)
- hot or restricting nightwear/ bedding/ clothes/ underwear
- electric blankets
- wool, nylon against the skin

BARRIER CREAMS

Barrier creams can be used when the skin is exposed to excessive moisture. Watery perspiration or menstrual blood can eventually cause rubbing and irritation. Zinc and castor oil cream, or Vaseline will protect and lubricate the area, especially if pads are worn. This can also be good when jogging, swimming, bicycling, etc. or if moisturisers do not provide long lasting lubrication. "Dermeze" is like a soft form of vaseline, good for larger areas and is available without a prescription. All the above can weaken a condom.

This fact sheet is designed to provide you with information on Genital Skin Care. 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.

GENITAL SKIN CARE

Sexual lubrication

Dry sexual activity inevitably worsens most genital symptoms. Until confidence increases and pain decreases, discuss and plan that penetration will be brief, if at all.

For women, if emotional and environmental factors are at their best for desired sexual activity and enough time is given to desired types of non-genital arousal initially, then one's own lubrication should be the best it can be. Many conditions can reduce this natural lubrication.

Where pregnancy and infection are not a concern, a vegetable oil (Crisco may be best) or a pure almond oil are more effective and longer lasting than a water based gel or saliva. (Pre-test on a small area before using during sexual activity).

If condoms are used there are two options:

1. water based lubricant (e.g. KY jelly, Ansell's gel, 'silk', 'wetstuff'). These are all water based and may dry out during sex. Rinse off after and apply a moisturiser. Keep penetration brief

2. vegetable oil (e.g. Crisco) may WEAKEN a condom within 5 minutes of use. Therefore brief penetration should leave the condom intact.

General information & products

- toilet paper — use unbleached and unperfumed. Gentle washing may be preferable to rubbing (Carry a squeeze bottle with tap or saltwater) or try a smear of Sorbolene cream on toilet paper to help wiping

- increase fluids (water, cranberry juice, herbal teas) to produce a dilute, less irritating urine. (Limit caffeine/cola/chocolate which act as diuretics. Excess chilli can cause perianal irritation)

- avoid constipation or excessively soft bowel actions
- try hypoallergenic washing detergents for underwear and use an extra rinse cycle.

DO NOT ADD FABRIC SOFTENER

- cotton underwear is best. Wash before first use
- try crutchless pantyhose or stockings
- avoid tight trousers

Try the following web link for more information.
www.dermnetnz.org/