

Balanitis fact sheet

Balanitis is inflammation of the head of the penis (glans penis).

Quick facts

- Balanitis is more common in people who have an uncircumcised penis
- Balanitis is generally treated by improving genital skin care

How do you get it?

Balanitis is more common in people who have an uncircumcised penis.

Causes can include:

- overuse of soaps
- skin disorders
- infection
- poor hygiene
- uncontrolled diabetes

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms include:

- blotchy pink or red rash on head of penis or foreskin or both
- pain or swelling of the head of the penis
- itching and discomfort
- discharge from under the foreskin

How is it treated?

Balanitis is treated and prevented by good genital skin care:

- wash under your foreskin and around the head of your penis daily using warm water - do not use hot water
- do not use soap to wash your penis
- you can use a soap-free wash such as Sorbolene cream, QV® Wash or Hamilton® Skin Therapy Gentle Wash. These products are available from the supermarket or pharmacy.
- dry the head of your penis gently before you put on underpants
- when you go to the toilet to pass urine, pull your foreskin back so that urine does not get under the foreskin. After you finish, dry the end of your penis and then roll your foreskin back.
- wash and dry your penis after sex and masturbating

A bath in salty water may help soothe the itch and discomfort.

If symptoms do not go away, use an antifungal cream such as Canesten® (1% clotrimazole). You can buy this cream at a pharmacy without a prescription.

Use the cream as follows:

- rub the cream onto the head of your penis, twice a day until the irritation goes away and then for a further 7 days after that
- use the cream after you shower
- if you still have symptoms a week after starting treatment, see your doctor

If you get balanitis frequently, or if your foreskin is too tight to roll back easily, see your doctor.

Where can I get help?

- Visit your local doctor
- Visit your local community health centre

Disclaimer

This fact sheet provides general sexual health information and is not intended to replace the need for a consultation with your doctor. If you have concerns about your health, you should seek advice from your doctor.

If you need urgent care, go to your nearest Emergency Department or call-000.