

# Comfort Measures to Decrease Vulvar Irritation, Itching, and Pain

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The vulva is the external genital skin of the female. The skin of the vulva can be very sensitive to changes.

## How can I decrease irritation, itching and pain on vulva?

- Keep the area dry. Gently pat the skin dry.
- Rinse the vulva with water frequently. You can use a sitz bath, squirt bottle, or bidet.
- Do not use soap on the vulva. For other body areas we recommend the following bars of soap: Neutrogena unscented face soap, Basis, or Pears (made in England). You can find these soaps at your local pharmacy or health food store. **Remember frequent baths with soaps will increase the irritation.** Do not use bubble bath.
- Wear 100% white cotton underwear. Avoid pantyhose, tights, and tight fitting clothes.. Using synthetic fibers holds heat and adds moisture to the area. This may increase your symptoms of discomfort. Do not wear **underwear or pajama bottoms at nighttime.**

## Which everyday chemicals increase itching and discomfort on the vulva?

Chemicals found in toilet tissue, laundry soap, detergent, dryer sheets, fabric softeners, feminine hygiene products, diaper wipes, flushable wipes, panty liners, tampons, menstrual pads, and incontinence pads can cause irritation to the vulva. Follow these suggestions to reduce exposure to chemicals that may increase your itching and discomfort:

- Use chemical free detergents such as: Tide Free, ALL Free & Clear, or Dreft for your clothing.
- Rinse clothing thoroughly. Sometimes putting them thorough another cycle of water rinsing can decrease detergent residue.

### **What can I do to alleviate irritation, itching, and pain**

- Apply a compress of oiled Aveeno (powdered oatmeal bath treatment) when symptoms of itching are significant. This can be placed on the vulva 3-4 times a day. To make the compress, mix in jar 2 tablespoons of Aveeno with 1 quart of water. Place in refrigerator.
- Consider using 100% cotton menstrual pads and tampons. You can find these at health food stores..
- Make your own 100% white cotton wipes. Cut squares or rectangles from flannel you buy at the fabric store and wet them with water. Store the wipes in a plastic container.
- Remove your exercise clothing as soon as possible after exercise to decrease moisture build up. Remove your swim suit as soon as possible after swimming and rinse the area.

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