

INFORMATION LEAFLETS FOR PARENTS / CARERS OF A CHILD

VULVOVAGINITIS IN CHILDREN AND YOUNG GIRLS



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. As girls enter puberty, this usually improves.

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.

Signs and 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

Causes

Things that may trigger vulvovaginitis include:

- The lining of the vagina and vulva can be quite thin in young girls and this can lead to it being easily irritated.
- Moisture / dampness around the vulva. This is made worse by tight clothing and obesity.
- Irritants (soap residue, bubble baths, antiseptics etc.)
- Infrequent bathing or poor toileting habits.

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 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 specialist for further management.

Care at home

- Wear loose cotton underwear and avoid tight jeans
- Make sure that your daughter is wiping from front to back when toileting, particularly after opening bowels
- Avoid irritants e.g. perfumes, dyes, some laundry detergents,
- Avoid wearing a wet bathing suit for a long period of time or heavily chlorinated swimming pool water,
- Look at your child's weight and ask for advice if she is overweight for her age and height.
- Avoid soap, antiseptics or anything that bubbles in the bath
- Bathing for 5-7 minutes daily with a soap substitute such as oilatum may help symptoms
- Soothing creams (e.g. soft paraffin) may help settle the soreness,
- Waterproof and protect the skin from the discharge which can be irritating.

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



Key points to remember

- Mild Vulvovaginitis is very common in young girls
- It may recur now and then but will improve as your child gets older
- In most cases no treatment or tests are necessary

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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