

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Thielen Student Health Center

2647 UNION DRIVE

Corner of Sheldon & Union
Across from State Gym

CLINIC HOURS

MONDAY 8 am - 6 pm

TUESDAY 8 am - 5 pm

WEDNESDAY 9 am - 5 pm

THURSDAY 8 am - 5 pm

FRIDAY 8 am - 5 pm

SATURDAY 9 am - noon

PLEASE CALL TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT

To schedule an appointment call (515) 294-5801. When you call for an appointment, please be specific about your needs so that we can schedule you with the appropriate healthcare provider and an appropriate amount of time.

515-294-5801
FREE MEDICAL
ADVICE 24/7

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for AMBULATORY HEALTH CARE, INC.

VULVAR DERMATITIS



CycloneHealth.org

Vulvar dermatitis is an irritation of the external female genital tissues associated with discomfort and itching. Dermatitis can occur anywhere on the body due to contact with some sort of irritant. This can occur with new product exposures or develop gradually over time with repeated exposure to the same product(s) used routinely.

SYMPTOMS OF VULVAR DERMATITIS INCLUDE:

- General discomfort, burning, or raw feeling of skin
- Redness or swelling
- Itching
- Pain with insertion of tampon, speculum or with intercourse

Vulvar dermatitis can be diagnosed by symptoms or during a brief exam of the area. If vaginal discharge is present your provider may suggest a pelvic exam to rule out an infection.

Treatment involves removing the offending irritant. Additionally, your provider may recommend certain products, such as a topical cream(s) or powder.

VULVAR HYGIENE GUIDELINES

LAUNDRY PRODUCTS

- Use a mild, enzyme free gentle detergent* on ALL laundry that goes into your washer, every load, every time. Use the smallest amount of detergent you can to get your laundry clean and select the double rinse option on your washing machine, if available.
- Avoid fabric softeners or dryer sheets, even if they are labeled as “free of perfume, scents or dyes” as they still may contain irritants. If you share a washer/dryer with others who use fabric softeners/dryer sheets consider hand washing and line-drying your underwear to avoid picking up residue from their products.
- To remove existing residue or oils from clothing, vinegar or lemon juice (1/4 c to 1/3 c per load) can be added directly to your washer. Instead of dryer sheets or fabric softener, dryer balls can soften your clothes without irritants.
- Stain removing products including bleach can cause irritation. Soak and rinse any underwear that have previously been stain treated in plain water, then wash with a gentle detergent.

*Gentle detergents can include: all® free clear, Tide® free & gentle, Dreft®.

CLOTHING

- Wear white cotton underwear to allow air in and keep moisture out. Avoid synthetic fabrics and thongs. Avoid wearing underwear at night. Loose fitting bottoms or shorts are fine.
- Avoid wearing tight fitting clothes like pantyhose, tights, or leggings. If you wear them, choose knee or thigh high, or cut out the diamond crotch (leaving ¼ inch of fabric to prevent nylons from running/ripping).
- Remove wet or damp clothes as soon as possible.

BATHING AND HYGIENE

- Avoid bath soaps, lotions, gels, oils, bath salts, bubble bath, etc. which contain perfumes. This includes products marked gentle or mild. Suggested soaps include: Dove® for sensitive skin, Neutrogena® Basis, Aveeno® or Pears®.
- Avoid using soap directly on the vulvar skin or scrubbing with a rough cloth. Just use warm water and your hand.
- Pat the affected area dry with a soft towel or use a hair dryer on the cool setting.
- Use unscented toilet paper, and pat dry instead of wiping.
- Avoid feminine sprays, perfumes, or wipes. Avoid using vaginal douches, deodorized pads or tampons.
- Only use cotton pads, do not use nylon pads. Avoid wearing pads on a daily basis. Examples of cotton pads include Stayfree®, Carefree® or Seventh Generation®.
- Avoid shaving or using hair removal products. You may trim the hair or consider laser hair removal as a permanent option once your dermatitis has healed.

AT HOME TREATMENT OPTIONS

- Witch Hazel (Tucks®) pads may help with inflammation and discomfort.
- Soaking in lukewarm water with 4-5 tablespoons of baking soda, 1-3 times daily for 10 minutes may help irritation and discomfort.
- Zinc oxide (Desitin®) ointment or Petroleum Jelly (Vaseline®) may be applied to the affected area. Vegetable or coconut oils may be applied to the skin for protection.
- Gold Bond® or Zeasorb® powder may be applied to the area 1-2 times daily to help absorb moisture. Avoid products with cornstarch or talc.

SEXUAL HEALTH

- Avoid condoms that contain spermicide or scented/flavored lubricants as they can cause irritation. Natural oils such as vegetable or coconut don't typically cause irritation.
- Petroleum-based lubricants and other oils may affect the integrity of latex or polyisoprene condoms. It is recommended that you use a polyurethane condom, such as Trojan® non-latex Bare Skin.
- Your sexual partner(s) should avoid perfumed personal care products.