

## Genital skin care

The most common cause of skin irritation are chemicals that we use every day without thinking. These chemicals can cause sensitivity, dryness, redness and cracking of the genital skin. Here are some simple measures that may help improve these problems.

### Do's and don'ts of genital skin care

#### Do's

- **Do** use non-perfumed soaps
- **Do** use just water or a soap substitute such as Aqueous cream or E45
- **Do** consider using a preparation such as E45, Diprobase or Hydromol as a moisturiser after washing (these and many other suitable products can be bought from a Chemist)
- **Do** wash your underwear in non-biological washing powder
- **Do** wear loose-fitting clothing and underwear made from natural fibres, e.g. cotton
- **Do** use unperfumed, uncoloured, non-bleached sanitary products, e.g. toilet paper, sanitary towels
- **Do** wash your hands before going to the toilet if you have a job where you are in contact with chemicals
- **Do** use a water or silicone based lubricant for sexual intercourse if it is uncomfortable, e.g. Sensilube, KY Jelly or another product designed for this purpose

#### Don'ts

- **Don't** wash the genital area with perfumed soap
- **Don't** use bubble bath, perfumed bath oils or shower gels on the genital area

- **Don't** wash hair in the bath – use the shower
- **Don't** rub the area vigorously when washing/drying
- **Don't** use feminine hygiene sprays, perfumes or wipes
- **Don't** use fabric conditioner on underwear
- **Don't** wear tight nylon clothes, e.g. underwear/tights
- **Don't** use disinfectant or antiseptics based products unless prescribed by a doctor
- **Don't** use flavoured or coloured condoms or lubricants
- **Don't** shave or use genital hair removal creams/foams/wax. Trimming is better on the genital skin
- **Don't** wear daily pads

Saltwater baths can soothe moist, irritated, itchy or inflamed genital skin. However, it may irritate dry skin conditions.

Directions: add two handfuls of regular table salt to a shallow warm bath and sit in it for 10 to 15 minutes, once a day for 2 or 3 days. Alternatively, bathe the genital area with a solution of 1 teaspoon salt to 1 litre of water.

**If you still have problems despite trying these simple measures you should seek advice from a doctor.**

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## Accessibility

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