

Notes:

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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Patient & Family Guide

Vulvar Skin Care Tips

2024

- **Do not** use baby wipes.
- **Do not** use vaginal care products (like Vagisil®).
- **Avoid** Always® pads. Use Kotex®, Poise®, or Tena® pads.
- **Do not** use laundry detergent. If detergent is needed, use Tide® Free & Gentle™.
- **Do not** use Purex® or Gain® laundry detergent.
- **Do not** use fabric softener or dryer sheets.
- **Do not** use toilet paper made from recycled paper.
- Wear white, 100% cotton underwear. Dyes and other fabrics can irritate your vulva.
- Keep your vulva uncovered as much as possible.
- **Only use unscented bar soap on your vulva** (like Olay® Sensitive, Aveeno® fragrance free, Dove® fragrance free, or unscented goat's milk soap).
 - > **Do not** use plant-based soaps.

Vulvar Skin Care Tips

The vulva (area around the vagina) can be very sensitive. If you have burning, itching, or irritation in this area, using some products or wearing certain fabrics or clothes can make it worse. This pamphlet has tips that may help with your symptoms and prevent more discomfort.

Washing your vulva

- Wash your vulva with water **or** a recommended soap (see front cover). If you have questions, ask a member of your health care team.
- **Do not use:**
 - › Douches
 - › Powders
 - › Products with alcohol
 - › Products with benzocaine (like Vagisil®)
 - › Vagisil® or other over-the-counter vaginal care products or medications
- **Do not** use baby wipes.
- Use your fingertips to wash your vulva. **Do not** use a washcloth.
- Use a soft towel to pat dry. **Do not** rub.
- To help dry your vulva, use a fan or a hair dryer on the cool setting.

To confirm or reschedule a Colposcopy Clinic appointment:

- › Phone: 902-473-6112

Colposcopy Clinic

5th Floor, Dickson Building
5820 University Avenue
Victoria General Hospital site, QE II
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 2Y9

What are your questions?

Please ask a member of your health care team. We are here to help you.

Sex

- Use a lubricant (lube)(like Astroglide®, Slippery Stuff®, or vegetable oil).
 - › **Do not** use K-Y® Jelly.
 - › **Do not** use Vagisil®.
- **Do not use** moisturizer with a condom. This can cause the condom to break.
- If sex hurts, try using a topical (on the skin) anesthetic (numbing) product (like Xylocaine® or lidocaine) 30 minutes before you have sex.
- **Do not** use:
 - › Latex condoms
 - › Contraceptive creams
 - › Spermicides

They can cause irritation and burning.

Use another form of birth control, if possible.

If you have questions or concerns:

- Colposcopy Clinic Nurse:
 - › Phone: 902-473-4181
 - › 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday to Friday

If it is an emergency, call 911, or go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.

- When your vulva is dry, put on clean, white, 100% cotton underwear.

Dryness and irritation

- For vulvar or perianal (the area between your vulva and anus [bum]) dryness, use petroleum jelly (like Vaseline®) or coconut oil.
- For vaginal dryness, use Replens™ 2 nights a week.
- Use unscented tampons instead of pads, if possible.
- If you use pads:
 - › Use only Kotex®, Poise®, or Tena®. **Do not** use Always®.
- **Do not** use panty liners.
- If you have a lot of vaginal discharge or you pee when you laugh, sneeze, or run, use incontinence pads (like Poise® or Tena®).
- **Do not** use toilet paper made from recycled paper.
 - › Use white, unscented toilet paper only.
- Pat your vulva dry. **Do not** rub.
- Keep your fingernails short. Consider wearing cotton gloves at night to help avoid scratching.

- If you have questions or concerns about your treatment, you may call the Clinic nurse:
 - › Phone: 902-473-4181
- If you have burning and itching, it may help to put something cold near your vulva. Try wrapping ice, frozen peas, cool packs, or a frozen gel pack in a soft towel.
 - › **To avoid frostbite, do not apply cold for more than 5 minutes at a time.**

Nutrition

- Drink lots of fluids every day to keep your pee and vaginal discharge thinner.
- Constipation (not being able to poop) can cause your vulvar tissue to tear. To prevent constipation, try eating more fibre:
 - › Eat 1 to 2 large servings of a high fibre cereal (8 to 14 grams of fibre in each serving) a day.
 - › Eat whole grains, beans, lentils, and leafy vegetables.
- If this does not help, ask your primary health care provider, or your pharmacist about over-the-counter products that may help.

Clothes

- **Do not** wear pantyhose, leggings, tights, or yoga pants. If you wear them, cut out the crotch to leave your vulva uncovered.
- **Do not** wear tight pants made of synthetic fabrics (like polyester or nylon).
- Take your underwear off when you are at home. Keep your vulva open to the air as much as possible.
- Wear white, 100% cotton underwear. Dyes and other fabrics can irritate your vulva.
- Take off wet swim suits and exercise clothes as soon as possible to prevent irritation.

Laundry

- **Avoid** using detergent to wash your underwear. Even “unscented”, “clear”, or “free” products (like Tide® Free & Gentle™) can cause an allergy or a reaction. **Do not** use Purex® or Gain® laundry detergent.
- **Do not** use fabric softener or dryer sheets (like Bounce®).
- If you are using a stain removal product:
 - › Soak your clothes and rinse them in cold water before washing them in the regular wash cycle.