

## Genital Skin Care



Almost all genital skin conditions benefit from simple changes to routine washing. Sometimes it's not possible to identify what caused the initial skin condition.

Once skin is irritated, many other things can make the situation worse and keep it from resolving. Sometimes products or practices you used in the past without any problems may make the condition worse.

### Tips to prevent or minimise irritation

Avoid soap, shampoo, body washes, bubble bath and other detergents, as they interfere with the skin's protective layer.

Keep to short, cooler showers: long hot showers increase itch and dry the skin. No more than 1-2 showers a day.

Avoid hot or tight nightwear, bedding, clothes and underwear.

Avoid wool and nylon against the skin.

Avoid scratching and cut fingernails so they can't damage your skin.

Avoid waxing, shaving and hair removal creams.

Don't use any creams that have not been prescribed for the condition including creams from the chemist or naturopath.

### Genital first aid

**Salt water baths:** One small handful of salt in a shallow bath, soak for 10-15 minutes, two-three times per day. Stop saltwater bathing/soaking after three four days as excessive soaks can over dry the skin.

**Cold packs:** Cold packs are very good for relieving itch and burning pain, as cold can block pain and itch sensations. Use a small ice pack or frozen peas wrapped in a soft towel and apply to skin until itch or pain resolves. Reapply if symptoms return.

**Soap substitutes:** can be used for dry or irritated skin, although washing just with warm water is enough.

There are a wide range of these eg:

- QV wash
- Hamilton's wash
- Dermaveen
- Avecyde

Some people find using Aqueous cream instead of soap is helpful.

## Moisturisers

Aqueous cream can be used as a wash or moisturiser. Vegetable Oil (e.g. olive oil) can be effective, but might feel greasy.

## General information and products

- Toilet paper: use non-coloured, unbleached and unperfumed. Gentle washing may be preferable to rubbing with toilet paper. Try gently washing in the shower or carrying a squeeze bottle with tap or saltwater. Alternatively, you can try a smear of Aqueous cream on the toilet paper to help wiping.
- Increase fluids to produce diluted, less irritating urine. Limit caffeine, cola and chocolate which can act as diuretics. Excess chilli can cause peri-anal irritation.
- Use liquid laundry detergent instead of powder, as powder can leave residue on clothing. Using an extra rinse cycle removes excess detergent from underwear. Do not use fabric softener.
- Avoid clothing with thick seams or tight fitting crotch area such as jeans and g-strings. Cotton underwear is best.
- Natural and organic skin products may also cause irritation. Check with your clinician prior to use
- Oil-based products may damage latex condoms and lead to breakage.

## Screening for STIs

All sexually active people should consider regular testing for sexually transmissible infections.

Gold Coast Sexual Health Service offers express STI screening that is available without an appointment providing you:

- do not have symptoms
- have not been in contact with a sexually transmissible infection.

If you have symptoms, or have been in contact with an STI, contact Gold Coast Sexual Health Service for an appointment.

Check our website at: <https://www.goldcoast.health.qld.gov.au/our-services/sexual-health> for times and locations



### Interpreter services

Gold Coast Health provides interpreter services for patients who are from non-English speaking backgrounds. If you require the assistance of an interpreter, please indicate this on your registration form and advise Gold Coast Health prior to your appointment.

**Interpreter services are provided free of charge to all patients who require the service, including non-Medicare patients.**



**For further information or support, please contact:**  
**Sexual health**  
**Southport Health Precinct**  
**16-30 High St, Southport, 4215**  
**Phone: 1300 744 284**