

# Vulvovaginitis

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## What is vulvovaginitis?

Vulvovaginitis is a condition where the vulva (outer female genitalia) and the vagina are irritated or inflamed. The symptoms are a red or itchy vulva, vagina or both. It may have been caused by an irritant (like scented soaps or tight clothing), by yeast or bacteria (tests can rule these out), or it may relate to hygiene or a need for different toileting habits.

## How can I make my child comfortable during treatment?

Here are some tips to help make your child more comfortable during their treatment of vulvovaginitis. Check with your healthcare provider first before giving any type of medicine to your child.

- **Bathing:** Avoid bubble baths. Do not use soap in the genital area, and use an unscented soap on the rest of the body.
- **Laundry:** Do not use any dryer sheets. If you add a fabric softener in the wash, make sure to follow with a rinse cycle.
- **Sitz baths:** Sit in plain, warm water for 10 minutes as needed. Do not scrub the genital area. When drying the genitals, pat instead of rubbing dry.
- **Creams and lotions:** Apply a thin coat of Vaseline, A&D ointment or coconut oil 1 to 3 times a day to protect the skin, if recommended by your healthcare provider. This can be especially important before swimming. Take off wet swimsuits as soon as possible after getting out of the water. Check with your doctor about using over-the-counter hydrocortisone cream 1% to help with itching 2 to 3 times a day.
- **Nighttime:** If recommended by your healthcare provider, use over-the-counter Benadryl as needed for itching. Cool compresses can also help your child fall asleep.
- **Clothing:** Make sure your child wears only 100% cotton underwear. Avoid tight clothing that could irritate the genital area.
- **Toileting:** When sitting on the toilet, your child should spread their legs far apart and lean forward, or they can sit backwards on the toilet (facing the tank). Use as little toilet paper as possible, and make sure it is unscented. A better choice is unscented, hypoallergenic moist wipes, or a wet washcloth.

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### To Learn More

- Adolescent Medicine  
206-987-2028
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- [seattlechildrens.org](http://seattlechildrens.org)

### Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.



Seattle Children's offers interpreter services for Deaf, hard of hearing or non-English speaking patients, family members and legal representatives free of charge. Seattle Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call the Family Resource Center at 206-987-2201. This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children's. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's healthcare provider.

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