

Vulvovaginitis in girls

What is vulvovaginitis?

Vulvovaginitis is a fairly common condition in young girls where the outer part of the vagina (vulva or “private parts”) become irritated and inflamed. It usually affects young girls who have not started puberty. It is uncomfortable but usually responds well to simple steps which can be taken at home. Some girls will have symptoms many times, and others only once.

What causes it?

Vulvovaginitis is caused by irritation of the skin by urine, moisture or other irritants (soap, bubble baths, detergents); and is often made worse by threadworms which cause itching around the bottom.

What are the symptoms?

These include:

- Pain, redness, and itching to the vulva.
- Pain and discomfort when passing wee (usually because the wee may irritate the sore skin).

What can be done to help?

- Encourage your child to drink plenty of water or dilute squash.
- Ensure they wear cotton underwear and avoid tight clothing – symptoms are often worse in a warm, moist environment.
- Use non-biological washing powders.
- Do not use fragranced soaps or bubble baths or avoid talcum powder.
- Encourage your child to wipe from front to back after using the toilet, and make sure that they wash their hands well.
- Some children find vinegar baths can be helpful – mix ½ cup of white vinegar into a warm, shallow bath and soak in it for 10-15 minutes. You can do this daily for a few days to see if it helps.
- A barrier cream, such as Sudocrem can be used in a thin layer to protect the skin.
- If your child is constipated, seek medical advice about how to treat this, as it may make symptoms worse.

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Vulvovaginitis and other conditions

Urine infections

Sometimes girls can have vulvovaginitis and a urine infection at the same time.

- ➔ If you think your child might have signs of a urine infection (weeing often, discomfort weeing and or a temperature) please speak to your GP. Your GP may check a sample of your child's urine and antibiotics may be prescribed if there is a urine infection.

Threadworms

Threadworms are tiny worms that live in the intestines and lay their eggs at night around the anus/bottom. They make vulvovaginitis worse, so it is important that they are treated.

- ➔ If you think your child may have threadworms, ask your pharmacist or GP about treatment.
- Threadworms are easily got rid of with a single dose of a medicine called mebendazole (Ovex™, Vermox™), which can be bought from a Pharmacy.
- The whole family should be treated at the same time. Bedding and towels should be washed in a hot wash to eradicate any remaining eggs.

What if your child doesn't get better?

In most cases, using the above methods will help make the symptoms of vulvovaginitis better within a few weeks.

- ➔ If symptoms don't improve please seek advice from your GP who may advise different creams, or a swab of the area to check for infection.

If your child has fever and pain on passing urine, this is more likely to be a urinary tract infection and will need medical treatment so please contact your GP.

- ➔ Please contact your GP in the first instance and if you've followed the advice in this leaflet and the problem still persists, your GP may wish to refer your child to a paediatric clinic, if necessary.



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020 8934 3993

khft.pals@nhs.net

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Please call the hospital switchboard on 020 8546 7711 and ask to speak to the Duty Chaplain.

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