



Vulvar Hygiene

There seems to be an increase of vulvar disease, some of which is no doubt due to the dress habits and materials that are being utilized in clothes. Because of some of these problems, there is a marked increase in the number of women with vulvar disease that requires a more careful approach to what we call “vulvar hygiene.” It is important that anyone who has a vulvar problem pay particular attention to her hygiene as well as to the clothes that she is wearing.

Be aware of the following items:

1. Clothing should be loose fitting. Tight jeans and binding clothes cannot be worn. It is best to wear dresses and pure cotton undergarments – LOOSE FITTING is a must! Use of cotton-lined pantyhose is unsatisfactory and will do little to solve the problem. It is best to wear dresses that go to or below the knees and wear no undergarments at all for those individuals who have particularly annoying vulvar problems that are difficult to control.
2. Avoid douching.
3. Toilet paper must be plain or white. No dyes or perfumes!
4. Do not use soap to cleanse the vagina. A clean washcloth and water is sufficient. Avoid fabric softeners, which may lead to itching.
5. We encourage patients to wear loose fitting pajamas without the use of underwear or undergarments. Do not cover the pubic area.
6. Vaginal discharge may be a contributing factor to a vulvar problem. Up to two tablespoons of clear or white discharge is normal. If you have colored discharge or notice an odor, you need to be evaluated for an infection.
7. It is not necessary to shave the pubic hair.

The hygiene procedure outlined below has been found to be fairly successful in most patients. It relieves many patients’ symptoms without the use of medication.

1. Wash the perineum thoroughly with water.
2. Dry thoroughly with a soft cotton towel between the lips of the vulva, including the area around the opening and slightly into the vagina.
3. Thoroughly dry the vulva with a hair dryer with a low heat setting. This adds to further improvement of vulvar hygiene. You must be careful not to burn yourself.
4. If there continues to be sweating or moisture, we suggest using some type of corn starch powder to assist in drying up the vulvar tissues.