



Southern
Urogynecology

Center for Incontinence and Female Pelvic Medicine

TIPS ON VULVAR CARE

The skin area around the outside of the vagina in women is called the vulva. This area includes the skin around the urethra and the vaginal lips. In many women with chronic vaginitis, or problems with urinary incontinence, the skin in this area may be red, raw and sore from chronic irritation. If this is a problem for you, these tips may help make you more comfortable and avoid irritation of the bladder, urethra, and surrounding skin.

- Wear **only** cotton underwear.
- Do **not** wear synthetic underwear or pantyhose, particularly not under pants or jeans, as they may cause irritation.
- Do **not** use fabric softeners on your underwear because it may cause irritation.
- Do **not** use vaginal deodorants, feminine hygiene sprays, or douches.
- Do **not** use bath oil, bubble bath, or bath salts.
- Try to wash the vulvar area no more than twice a day and use only plain water or simple soap, such as Ivory®.
- Avoid using tampons, which may irritate the bladder and urethra, if this area is especially bothersome to you.
- After bathing, pat the area dry with a towel and then use a blow-dryer to dry the vulva completely.
- If you need a powder to help keep you dry, do **not** use talcum powder. Try using ordinary cornstarch or baby powder with cornstarch.
- Try drinking pure water as much as possible and avoid coffee, tea, cola beverages, alcohol, and other drinks which may irritate the bladder and urethra.
- Finally, if the area remains painful, or if there is a sore which will not seem to heal, or if there is a spot which just doesn't look right – see a doctor promptly. There are other causes of problems in this area of the body which may need a different from of treatment.