

Vulvodynia for Patients: Self Care 101

Clothing:

- White 100 % cotton underwear
- No underwear at night
- No pantyhose. Switch to knee hi/thigh hi
- Loose fitting pants/skirts/dresses
- Remove wet/sweaty clothing immediately
- Pack spare underwear to change if excessive discharge or incontinence

Laundry:

- Gentle detergent such as dreft or ivory snow
- Double rinse cycle to remove chemicals
- No fabric softener

Personal Products:

- Organic cotton tampons/pads
- Avoid scented/perfumed soaps, bubble baths, products for genital “hygiene”
- White unscented toilet paper, softest you can find

Bathing/Showering:

- Cool or lukewarm not hot water
- Gentle soaps such as SweetSpot, Aveno, Dove
- Use only your hand, not sponges or brushes on vulva
- Keep shampoo off vulva if possible
- Daily Sitz baths x 5 - 10 mins is soothing -- plain water or w/epsom salt
- After bath/shower: apply a barrier cream such as Epiceram, Aquaphor, Vaseline, Eucerin as a barrier

Healthy Lifestyle:

- Avoid chlorinated pools/hot tubs
- Regular voiding -- don't “hold it” -- and avoid constipation with adequate fiber, hydration
- “Potty Training:”use a squirt bottle w/water to vulva, perineum, then pat dry
- Avoid biking or horseback riding, anything which puts pressure on vulva
- Avoid prolonged sitting; sit with a doughnut pillow or cut out; standing desk

Sex:

- Water-based lube (the least irritative in studies is PreSeed)
- Vaginal valium suppositories one hour before
- Prep with dilators (SoulSource is my favorite brand) or a vibrator
- Ice pack to vulva after sex
- Topical lidocaine to introitus
- Ohnut to limit depth of penetration