



Ibstock &  
Barlestone  
Surgeries

Traditional Values, Modern Healthcare

# ***Genital Health and Vulvovaginitis Information Leaflet for Young Girls***

Ibstock: 01530 263467

Barlestone: 01455 299920

E-mail: [ibstockhouse@nhs.net](mailto:ibstockhouse@nhs.net)

Website: [www.ibstockhousesurgery.nhs.uk](http://www.ibstockhousesurgery.nhs.uk)

It is not uncommon for young girls to experience occasional genital redness, pain, itching or irritation. For many girls, these symptoms will get better with changes in toileting, bathing and dressing habits.

## **What is Vulvovaginitis?**

Vulvovaginitis is a very common disorder affecting girls between the ages of 2 (two) and 7 (seven) years. It is inflammation of the vagina and vulva (private parts).

## **What are the symptoms?**

The main symptoms are vaginal discharge and soreness. The discharge can be yellow or green and can be smelly. Other symptoms may include redness of the vulval area, itching, and pain when passing urine.

## **What causes it?**

Vulvovaginitis is usually caused by repeated infections with bugs that are a normal part of the body. They often live in the gut, bowel, nose or mouth. These bugs are easily transferred to the vulval area by young girls as they learn to be responsible for their own personal hygiene. Other factors that make girls who have not yet gone through puberty more prone to infection in this area are:

- A lack of female hormones which make the vagina and vulva thin and less resistant to infection
- The vagina is not acidic like after puberty so bugs can easily grow and cause infection
- The vulva is very close to the anus (bottom) so making it easy to spread bugs from the bowel to the vulva
- The labia (lips) are flat and undeveloped and do not pose a barrier to infection

## **Are any tests necessary?**

Sometimes your doctor may take a swab of the discharge from the outside of the vagina. This does not hurt. If there is pain on passing urine, a urine sample may be sent to look for infection. If any infection shows up on either of these tests, it may be treated with antibiotics.

## **Are there any other treatments?**

There is no single treatment, and the condition will disappear when puberty is reached. There are some helpful tips until that time which may help to improve symptoms:

### **Toileting:**

- Use a foot stool if their feet do not touch the floor.
- Use at least 6 (six) squares of toilet tissue, folding and holding it to cover their fingers.
- Place the tissue in front of the genital area, pat firmly with the tissue and push backwards towards their bottom, always wiping in a front to back direction.
- If not dry or clean, using fresh tissue, wipe again in the same direction until completely clean.
- Constipation can make the problem worse. Try to avoid it with a healthy diet, or if it is a problem, get it treated by your GP.

### **Bathing:**

- Bathe daily whilst irritation present and at least 2 (two) to 3 (three) times per week thereafter, bathing them before bedtime.
- Sit them in clear water for approx. 10 minutes.
- Wash their genital area gently from front to back with water or aqueous cream as a soap substitute (avoid bubble baths and soapy water).
- Wash their hair at the end of the bath.
- Pat the genital area dry with a dry towel or allow to 'air dry'.
- Do not use powder, baby wipes, adult bath products or medicines on their genital area. A barrier cream such as Sudocrem can be used if the skin is sore. Do not apply any other types of creams unless advised by your GP.

### **Dressing:**

- Wear all cotton underwear and loose fitting jeans and pants (avoid wearing at night).
- If underwear is wet or soiled put on clean underwear.

## **Will the condition cause any long-term problems?**

The infections associated with Vulvovaginitis are different from those that adult women get and do not cause any problems with menstruation (periods) or fertility. There is no association with pelvic inflammatory disease or tubal damage.