

**For more information contact:**

**Sexual Health Quarters**

70 Roe Street, Northbridge WA 6003  
Ph 08 9227 6177 | info@shq.org.au

**Sexual Health Helpline**

Metropolitan callers 08 9227 6178  
Country callers 1800 198 205  
sexhelp@shq.org.au

Your local contact is:

**shq.org.au**



SHQ acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land and community. In particular we acknowledge the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation who are the traditional owners of the land on which we are based.

# Genital Skin Care



**Genital skin is especially sensitive, making it prone to irritation.**

**How to care for your genital skin**

- Use cool water to wash genital skin. Avoid using soaps, antiseptics, bubble baths, perfumes, bath salts, talcum powder or deodorants – plain water or a soap free wash is best
- Wash genital skin gently. Don't over-wash the area (once a day is sufficient), and pat dry, rather than rubbing with a towel. People with a foreskin should gently pull it back and wash underneath
- Wear loose-fitting clothing to allow genital skin to remain cool
- Wear loose-fitting cotton underwear (not synthetic) and change it daily. Rinse underwear thoroughly after washing to remove laundry detergent (don't add fabric softener)
- Change out of damp swimwear or exercise clothing as soon as possible
- Use soft, unperfumed toilet paper, and always wipe from front to back
- Change pads or tampons regularly (at least every 3-4 hours), and don't use perfumed pads or tampons. Avoid daily use of panty liners
- Be aware that shaving or waxing the genital area can irritate genital skin
- Don't douche (flush liquids into the vagina).

**If you have genital skin irritation**

- Avoid scratching or rubbing the skin as this can make things worse. Burning and irritation can often be relieved by cool washes or compresses
- Avoid allowing genital skin to dry out. Moisturising the skin with aqueous cream or sorbolene can reduce irritation
- Avoid wearing tight-fitting clothing such as jeans, g-strings and pantyhose
- Avoid sex, or consider alternatives to intercourse if you are experiencing irritation. Some lubricants can also cause irritation, so you may need to try a few different kinds to find one that is comfortable to use
- Avoid long exposure to hot, sweaty or chafing conditions, and limit exercises that irritate genital skin.

If you are experiencing persistent genital skin irritation, or have any concerns about your genital skin, it is important to see a health professional so you can be given the right treatment.