



Health Tips For Women's Wellness

ISSUE: APRIL 2024



CareNine is a pregnancy support program structured to educate, guide and reassure 'mothers-to-be' with the help of counselling from specialists; all under one roof.



Women's Health: Vulvar dermatitis: What is it and how to treat it?

Vulvar dermatitis is common in women, but most cases go untreated because of lack of awareness. Make sure to keep your vagina healthy and safe with proper information, as guided here.



Preconception Care: How do fibroids impact your chances of pregnancy?

Fibroids can lead to pregnancy complications but how can you steer clear? Reason to find out.



CareNine: Common types of birth injuries to the baby

Your baby can get injured in the birthing process and it's vital for new moms to know how serious these injuries can be. Find out all about it here.



CareNine Beyond: Baby's head: Is it deformed and can it affect their health?

Baby's heads can seem like a mystery but we can help you uncover it carefully. Know more about the common deformities and how you should handle them.



CareNine: Understanding twin or multiple pregnancy: what should you know?



Expecting two or more newborns? This article will help you get started with basic information to plan for multiple pregnancy.



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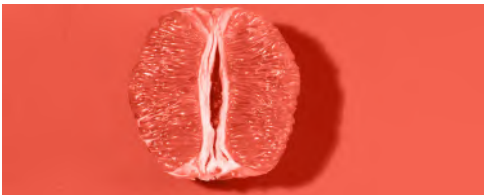
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Women's Health: Vulvar dermatitis: what is it and how to treat it?

Vulvar dermatitis is a common skin condition that causes irritation, inflammation and itching in the vulva, the external part of the female genitals. It can cause crust formation in the folds of skin around the vagina, along with red patches and thin cracks.

Symptoms of vulvar dermatitis

The most common symptom of vulvar dermatitis is mild to severe itching. Other symptoms include:

- Redness
- Swelling
- Burning
- Dryness
- Pain
- Blisters or cracks
- Skin feels burning and sensitive
- A damp feeling in the vulva caused by fluids seeping out of damaged skin
- Pain while insertion, during intercourse or while inserting tampons and menstrual cups

What causes vulvar dermatitis?

- **Irritants:** Soaps, shampoo, bath salts, detergents, dyes, perfumes, vaginal douches, spermicides and harsh toilet paper can all irritate the delicate skin of the vulva.
- **Allergic reactions:** You may develop an allergic reaction to a product that you use on your vulva or that comes into contact with it, such as laundry detergent, fabric softener, perfume or latex condoms.
- **Friction:** Tight clothing, excessive sweating and sexual activity can all irritate the vulva. Even friction with chemically treated clothing and materials such as nylon underwear can cause it.
- **Medical conditions:** Certain conditions, such as eczema, psoriasis and diabetes, can increase your risk of developing vulvar dermatitis.
- **Menopause:** Declining oestrogen levels after menopause can make the vulva thinner and more susceptible to irritation.

There are also some known allergens which don't immediately trigger the symptoms of vulvar dermatitis but their contact can contribute to vaginal irritation, such as:

- Neomycin
- Benzocaine
- Chlorhexidine
- Imidazole antifungal
- Propylene glycol
- Tea tree oil

- Fragrances
- Latex

Other causes can include health conditions such as vulvar cancer (rare cases), pubic lice, psoriasis and infections.

Diagnosis of vulvar dermatitis

If you suspect having vulvar dermatitis, immediately contact your healthcare provider, who can guide you through the diagnosis and treatment. They usually record your medical history and symptoms and conduct a physical exam. After patch testing for allergies and biopsy to rule out other health concerns, they can initiate the treatment of vulvar dermatitis.

Care guidelines for vulvar dermatitis

- **Identify and avoid triggers:** Determine the cause of the dermatitis and avoid exposure to irritants or allergens.
- **Maintain proper hygiene:** Keep the vulvar area clean and dry. Use mild, fragrance-free soap and water for cleansing.
- **Avoid scratching:** In the case of severe itching, use medicines and ointments, as scratching can lead to further inflammation and potential infection.
- **Topical treatments:** Depending on the severity of the dermatitis, your doctor may prescribe topical anti-inflammatory creams to alleviate symptoms.
- **Antifungal or antibacterial medications:** If a fungal or bacterial infection causes dermatitis, your doctor may prescribe antifungal or antibacterial medications, such as creams, ointments or oral antibiotics, to treat the underlying infection.
- **Lifestyle modifications:** Making lifestyle changes can also help manage vulvar dermatitis. These may include wearing loose-fitting cotton underwear, avoiding excessive heat and moisture in the genital area and practising safe sex to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections.

With these care guidelines in mind, you can manage mild cases of vulvar dermatitis and even avoid it. In case the symptoms extend to fever and foul-smelling vaginal discharge, reach out to your healthcare provider for further medical counsel.

Sources:

- WebMD
- Cleveland Clinic
- University of Iowa
- Medical News Today



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Preconception Care: How do fibroids impact your chances of pregnancy?

Fibroids are non-cancerous growths in the uterus, it is common condition in women. While they rarely cause serious health problems. Well, it depends on individual cases but you should have a detailed knowledge of fibroids and their impact on your health to seek medical attention at the right time.

Understanding fibroids

Fibroids are made of muscle and fibrous tissue. They can vary greatly in size – from undetectable to grapefruit-sized. Fibroids can grow inside the uterine cavity (submucosal), within the muscle wall (intramural) or outside the uterus (subserosal).

Symptoms of fibroids

- Some women don't exhibit any symptoms of having fibroids at all. Those who have the symptoms, they commonly complain of:
- Lower back pain
- Constipation
- Heavy and painful periods
- Bleeding and spotting in between periods
- Anaemia, caused by excessive bleeding
- Pain during intercourse
- Frequent urination
- Difficulty in emptying your bladder

Impact of fibroids on fertility

- Most women with fibroids can conceive naturally. However, the location and size of fibroids can play a role.
- Submucosal fibroids protruding into the cavity may hinder implantation of a fertilised egg.
- Large fibroids can distort the uterine shape, influencing sperm motility and egg transport. It can also restrict foetal growth due to decreased space in the womb.
- The placenta can also break away from the uterine wall if it's blocked by a fibroid.
- Fibroids can also trigger uterine contractions, leading to premature delivery.
- Fibroids may increase the risk of miscarriage, especially submucosal ones.
- Fibroids may sometimes necessitate a caesarean section delivery.

When to take medical advice?

- Consult your healthcare provider if you have fibroids and are trying to conceive.
- Seek medical advice if you experience:
 - Heavy or prolonged menstrual bleeding
 - Pelvic pain or pressure
 - Difficulty getting pregnant

Fibroids are completely treatable

- Doctors typically diagnose fibroids through pelvic exams, ultrasounds or MRI scans.
- Treatment depends on the severity of symptoms and your desire for pregnancy.
- Options include medications to shrink fibroids, minimally invasive procedures like uterine artery embolization or surgical removal of fibroids (myomectomy).

You can have a healthy pregnancy with fibroids too!

- Prenatal care is crucial for women with fibroids who are pregnant.
- Regular checkups allow healthcare providers to monitor potential complications.
- Maintaining a healthy weight and lifestyle can optimize pregnancy outcomes.
- In vitro fertilisation (IVF) may be recommended for women with infertility due to fibroids, especially if other treatments have been ineffective.

If you have fibroids it doesn't mean that you can't get pregnant. Talk openly with your healthcare provider about your specific situation and individual risks. Together, you can create a plan to help you achieve a healthy pregnancy. There are medicines available to help you with the common symptoms of fibroids and a guided medical assistance is effective for healthy pregnancy with fibroids.

Sources:

- Healthline
- WebMD
- Mayo Clinic
- UT Southwestern Medical Center



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CareNine:

Understanding twin or multiple pregnancy: what should you know?

Even after the most elaborate pregnancy plans, there's one thing you can never plan, that is having twins or multiple pregnancies. It is all dependent on your hormones. Managing twin or multiple pregnancies requires you to focus more aspects than a single pregnancy.

Types of multiple pregnancies

- **Identical (Monozygotic):** Develop from a single fertilised egg that splits, resulting in babies with identical genes and appearance.
- **Fraternal (Dizygotic):** Two or more separate eggs are fertilised by different sperm, leading to babies with unique genes and potentially different appearances. Each baby has their own placenta and amniotic sac.

When it comes to triplets or more, there can be a combination of these pregnancies.

How are multiple pregnancies detected?

Most multiple pregnancies are identified on the ultrasound which creates the image of your uterus and baby(s) with sound waves. You must also keep in mind that sometimes pregnancies start with twins but later only one baby is born. This is called the vanishing twin syndrome. Keep in touch with your healthcare provider for informed assistance at all stages.

What do multiple pregnancies mean for the mom-to-be?

Before we discuss the health complications and concerns, the most obvious care guidelines associated with carrying multiple babies are:

- You'll have to undergo more frequent health checkups and stay in close monitoring by your healthcare provider. You'll also have to take more frequent ultrasounds and other tests.
- Having two or more babies naturally means more weight gain. To manage a healthy weight, you need to focus on having a good diet as per your babies' requirement but also engage in light exercising to stay active and fit.
- Most multiple pregnancies require C-section, so you can expect having an earlier delivery to reduce risks and complications in the third trimester.
- Stay hydrated at all times and include more liquid-based items to your daily diet.

Potential complications

While most multiple pregnancies progress smoothly, there's an increased risk of:

- **Preterm birth:** In case of multiple pregnancies, preterm birth is common. Your babies may also face complications like difficulty in breathing and digestion, vision problems and infections.
- **Preeclampsia:** A pregnancy complication involving high blood pressure and potential organ damage.
- **Gestational diabetes:** Risk of high blood sugar levels during pregnancy, that require monitoring and management, increases in multiple pregnancies.
- **Anaemia:** Iron deficiency is more common in multiple pregnancies due to increased nutritional demands.
- **Placenta abruption:** This is the condition of placenta detaching from the uterine wall before delivery. It is common in case of multiple births.

Preparing for multiple arrivals

- Stock up on essential supplies like diapers, wipes and feeding equipment – more wouldn't be enough!
- Consider meeting more parents who had multiple births to share experiences and learn from them.
- Don't compromise your rest and sleep even if it seems to be hard. In case of postpartum depression, contact your healthcare provider.

A multiple pregnancy is a unique and special journey. By being informed, receiving proper prenatal care and planning ahead, you can increase your chances of a healthy pregnancy and delivery for you and your multiples. Remember, a strong support system – family, friends and healthcare providers – is key to navigating this exciting chapter.

Sources:

- Mayo Clinic
- Cleveland Clinic
- Johns Hopkins Medicine



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CareNine: Common types of birth injuries to the baby

Most birth injuries are minor and heal with time. But expecting parents are often unaware that babies can also get birth injuries in the birthing process. They occur due to natural forces of labour and delivery. The common birth injuries to watch for are:

Minor injuries

- **Scalp Swelling (Caput Succedaneum):** Caused by pressure during delivery, this soft swelling or bulge on the scalp usually resolves within a few days and requires no treatment.
- **Bruising (Cephalohematoma):** Similar to caput succedaneum, it involves bleeding between the scalp and skull bone. It disappears on its own within weeks.
- **Facial Paralysis:** Temporary weakness or paralysis of facial muscles due to pressure on the facial nerve. Usually recovers completely within a few months.
- **Clavicle Fracture:** The most common bone fracture in newborns, often caused during shoulder delivery. Healing happens naturally and support might be provided for comfort.
- **Shoulder Dystocia:** Shoulder dystocia happens when the baby's shoulders become stuck behind the mother's pubic bone during delivery. This can result in brachial plexus injuries, such as Erb's palsy or Klumpke's palsy, affecting the movement and sensation in the baby's arm or hand.
- **Subconjunctival Haemorrhage:** In this case, the small blood vessels in the baby's eyes can get ruptured. This may cause red bands in the white part of one or both the eyes. This is usually not very serious and gets absorbed in 7–10 days.
- **Fractures:** Newborns can also have fractures in the upper arm bone and the upper leg bone. They experience pain in the first few days but with medical attention, the fractures can heal well.

Serious Injuries

- **Brachial Plexus Injury (Erb's Palsy):** Damage to nerves in the shoulder and arm, affecting movement. Physiotherapy is often helpful but some cases may require surgery.

- **Hypoxic-Ischemic Encephalopathy (HIE):** Oxygen deprivation during birth can lead to brain injury. Severity varies and treatment depends on the extent of damage.
- **Intracranial Haemorrhage (Bleeding in the Brain):** Bleeding within the skull can cause serious complications. Early diagnosis and intervention are crucial.
- **Spinal Cord Injuries:** Rare but serious, these can impact movement, sensation and bowel/bladder control. Treatment depends on the type and severity of the injury.

How to know if something is wrong with your newborn?

Usually a medical professional will check for all injuries in your baby. Still, you should immediately seek attention in case of the following symptoms:

- Unusual head shape or swelling that persists
- Seizures or tremors
- Feeding difficulties
- Weakness or paralysis in limbs
- Poor muscle tone
- Excessive crying

Reducing the risk factors

- Regular prenatal care helps identify potential risks and ensure a healthy pregnancy.
- Discuss delivery options with your healthcare provider and choose what's safest for you and your baby.
- Maintaining a healthy lifestyle during pregnancy is crucial.

Most birth injuries are minor and resolve on their own. However, being aware of the possibilities and seeking timely medical help can make a significant difference to your baby's overall wellbeing.

Sources:

- *Stanford Medicine*
- *MSD Manual*
- *Medical News Today*



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CareNine Beyond: Baby's head: is it deformed and can it affect their health?

A baby's head is a matter of mystery and concern for most new parents. There are experienced opinions coming from all sides related to baby's head and care guidelines. But it may come as a surprise to most new parents that their babies don't have round heads and the shapes vary according to their birth experience and posture in the uterus.

Why don't newborns have perfectly round heads?

A newborn's skull isn't one solid bone. It has several soft plates that allow the head to compress during birth. This flexibility helps the baby pass through the birth canal. After birth, these plates gradually harden, forming the familiar round shape. Additionally, babies spend a lot of time on their backs. This can cause a flattened area to develop, especially if they favour one side.

Types of concerning head shapes

- **Plagiocephaly:** This is a flattening on the back or side of the head. It's usually positional and harmless.
- **Brachycephaly:** The head appears short and wide from the front. It can sometimes occur with plagiocephaly.
- **Craniosynostosis:** This is a rare birth defect where skull sutures (joints) close too early, affecting head shape and brain growth.

How to tell the difference?

- **Plagiocephaly and Brachycephaly:** These are often symmetrical and don't affect the facial features or feel like a hard lump. A healthcare professional can typically diagnose by visual examination.
- **Craniosynostosis:** The head shape may be asymmetrical, with a prominent ridge and a bulging fontanelle (soft spot). Early detection is crucial, so consult a doctor immediately if you suspect this.

Can an odd head shape affect my baby's health?

- **Plagiocephaly and Brachycephaly:** These typically don't affect brain development or cause health problems. However, severe cases might impact facial symmetry.

- **Craniosynostosis:** This can lead to developmental delays and increased pressure on the brain. Early intervention is essential to prevent complications.

Treating an uneven head shape

- In case your baby doesn't have a concerning health issue related to the head shape, follow at-home tips to adjust the head shape:
- Change your baby's sleeping position: Let them sleep on the back but keep alternating the direction of their face on the crib.
- Hold them upright: Hold your baby upright when they're awake to relieve the pressure on their heads. Try to hold them from alternate arms while feeding.
- Allocate some tummy time: Don't let your baby sleep on the back all the time. Consider placing them on their bellies when they're awake for some tummy playtime.

When to take medical help?

- You should consult your healthcare provider continuously after birth. But certain cases require urgent attention, such as:
- Your baby's head is not growing at all.
- There's no soft spot on your baby's head.
- The head is still misshapen 2 weeks or more after birth.
- A bulging or sunken spot persists on the baby's head.
- There are changes in the baby's forehead or eye shape.

Remember that a slightly misshapen head is common in newborns and it often resolves naturally. If you're still concerned about the head shape and want to rule out any potential issue, visit your healthcare provider for medical guidance.

Sources:

- Mayo Clinic
- Healthline
- WebMD
- Alcam Medical/O&P