



Pain 'Down There'

Vaginal Health Guide

Vaginal entrance pain or penetration pain in reproductive-aged women is, by far, most commonly caused by a condition called Vulvar Vestibulodynia (sometimes referred to as Vulvar Vestibulitis or Vestibulitis). The area of tissue or skin surrounding the opening of the vagina contains many small nerve endings. In the case of Vulvar Vestibulodynia, those nerve endings are firing off, and this causes reactions like inflammation and sensitivity, which can become increasingly severe.

The DVD, *Healing the Pain 'Down There': A Guide for Females with Persistent Genital and Sexual Pain*, further explains this and other related conditions, and also gives you a way to test yourself for this condition in particular. We also encourage you to visit the website for the National Vulvodynia Association at www.nva.org. The following vaginal health guidelines are specific to the self treatment of Vulvar Vestibulodynia, however they are good guidelines to adhere to for overall vaginal health, even if this condition may not apply to you.

- After swimming, remove your wet bathing suit quickly and pat dry your vaginal region. Also consider using sensitive cleansing wipes.
- Pat dry your vaginal region immediately after showering.
- Use detergents that are free and clear of perfumes and dyes for sensitive skin.
- Use dryer sheets or fabric softeners that are free and clear of perfumes and dyes for sensitive skin.
- Use chemical-free feminine products (such as Natracare).
- Wear white cotton underwear for everyday use.
- Sleep without underwear.
- When washing your body in the shower or bath use all natural and organic products with no added fragrances such as those from The Honest Company.
- Ensure shampoos and conditioners run down your back when rinsing them out; don't allow them to run down the front of your body. Or change your shampoos and conditioners to all natural/organic.
- Avoid riding bicycles or stationary exercise cycles. Or trial use of easy seat (split seat).
- Use natural and organic lubricants like *Yes, Woo For Play* or plain fractionated coconut oil.
- Advise your partner to refrain from using sprays and deodorants on their genitals and the surrounding area.
- Wash your hands before you use the bathroom to ensure no irritant on your hands is transferred to the area when you wipe with toilet paper.
- Consider carrying a 2-3 oz. squeeze bottle of water and squirt the area with water after urinating as the acid in urine is irritating. Then pat dry.
- Use all natural and organic soothing cream before and after sex, and before bed. *V Magic* by Medicine Mama's Apothecary or *Julva Cream*.