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**VULVAR SKIN CARE GUIDELINES - PERICARE**

Our goal is to promote healthy vulvar skin. This will help to alleviate external genital burning, itching, and irritation. Our goal is accomplished by decreasing and removing chemicals, moisture, friction, or rubbing. We have had success in helping to alleviate the above symptoms by using the techniques and/or products listed below.

**LAUNDRY PRODUCTS**

Use a detergent that is free of dyes, enzymes, and perfumes. This should be the case for every load of laundry that goes into your washing machine. Use 1/3 to 1/2 the suggested amount per load. A recommended brand is ALL FREE & CLEAR.

Do not use fabric softeners or dryer sheets in the washer or dryer, even those advertised as "free." If you use a shared washer or dryer (e.g. laundromat or college dorm), you should hand wash and line dry your underwear, towels, and any other clothing that comes in contact with your vulva.

Stain removing products (including bleach) should be followed by soaking and rinsing underwear and towels in clear water. This removes as much of the product as possible. Then wash in your regular washing cycle. White vinegar or lemon juice 1/4 - 1/3 cup per laundry load can be used to freshen clothing and remove oils.

**CLOTHING**

Wear white ALL COTTON underwear, not nylon with a cotton crotch. Cotton allows air in and moisture out. Do not wear underwear when sleeping at night. Loose fitting cotton boxers or cotton pajama bottoms are fine.

Avoid pantyhose. If you must wear them, either cut out the diamond crotch (if you cut out the crotch be sure to leave about 1/4 inch of fabric from the seam to prevent running). An alternative is to wear thigh high hose.

Avoid tight clothing, especially clothing made of synthetic fabrics. Particularly avoid Spandex. Remove wet bathing and exercise clothing as soon as you can.

**BATHING AND HYGIENE**

Do not use bath soaps, lotions, or gels which contain perfumes. These may smell nice, but can be irritating. This includes many baby products and feminine hygiene products marked "gentle" or "mild." Recommended products include: DOVE FOR SENSITIVE SKIN (bar soap, not body wash), NEUTROGENA, BASIS, AVEENO, or PEARS. Do not use soap directly on the vulvar skin. Just warm water and your hand will keep the vulvar area clean without irritating the skin.

Do not use bubble baths, bath salts, or scented oils. You may apply a neutral (unscented, non-perfumed) oil or lotion to damp skin after getting out of the tub or shower. However, do not apply lotion directly to the vulva.

Do not scrub vulvar skin with a washcloth. Use only your hand and warm water.

Pat dry rather than rubbing with a towel. Another alternative is to use a blow dryer on the COOL setting.