

BALANITIS



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

Inflammation of the glans (head) of the penis and sometimes the foreskin as well. It is a common condition in males. It occurs more often in males who have a foreskin (have not been circumcised).

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Tenderness, redness, itching, and swelling of the head of the penis.
- Inflammation of the foreskin.
- Unable to retract foreskin (phimosis).
- Impotence.
- Discharge from the penis.
- Burning during urination (rare).

CAUSES

The inflammation is a reaction to infection (most common cause), injury, or irritation of the penis. Sometimes the cause is unknown.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Diabetes.
- Poor hygiene.
- Allergy to chemicals in clothing, contraceptive cream, or condom latex.
- Reaction to certain drugs.
- Trauma or minor injury to the foreskin and penis.
- Presence of foreskin.
- Sexual partner affected by vaginitis (rare).
- Being very obese.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Wash daily with soap and water and wash after sexual intercourse. Clean carefully under the foreskin.
- Control diabetes or other medical conditions.
- Weight loss for obese males.
- Use a latex condom during intercourse to help prevent some infections.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Usually curable in 1 to 2 weeks with treatment.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Chronic inflammation can cause:
 - Scarring and narrowing of the opening of the penis (urethral stricture).
 - Phimosis (difficult to retract the foreskin).
 - Paraphimosis (unable to replace the foreskin to cover the head of the penis).



DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- Your health care provider can usually diagnose the disorder by an exam of the penis. A culture of the discharge from the penis may be done. Tests for other medical disorders such as diabetes may be done.
- Treatment usually involves drugs applied to the penis and practicing good hygiene.
- Use warm-water soaks to relieve pain or discomfort.
- A foreskin that cannot be retracted may be treated with topical steroid drugs, stretching techniques (done 2 to 3 weeks), or by a special slit made in the foreskin.
- Surgery may be recommended to circumcise the penis if balanitis recurs often or scar tissue develops.

MEDICATIONS

- Antibiotics to be applied to the penis are usually prescribed. Rarely, antibiotics to be taken by mouth may be prescribed.
- Steroid skin creams may be prescribed.
- Use acetaminophen or ibuprofen to relieve minor pain.

ACTIVITY

- Avoid sexual intercourse during treatment.
- Resume your normal activities when the infection is cured.

DIET

No special diet.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of balanitis.
- Symptoms don't improve in 3 days, despite treatment.

Special notes:

More notes on the back of this page