

PAIN WITH URINATION (CHEMICAL URETHRITIS)

DEFINITION

- Discomfort with passing urine (dysuria)
- Burning or stinging with passing urine
- Urgency and frequency are occasionally present
- Uses bubble bath, bathes in soapy water, or washes genitals with soap
- Prepubertal girl
- No evidence for a urinary tract infection

Cause

The most common cause of mild pain or burning with urination in young girls is an irritation of the vulva (vulvitis) and the opening of the urethra (urethritis). The irritation is usually caused by bubble bath, shampoo, or soap that was left on the genital area. Occasionally, it is due to poor cleansing of the genital area after passing a bowel movement. This chemical urethritis occurs almost exclusively before puberty. At that age, the lining of the vulva is very thin and sensitive. However, since 5% of young girls get urinary tract infections (UTIs), one must always consider this diagnosis. A UTI is a bacterial infection of the bladder (cystitis) and sometimes the kidneys.

Expected Course of Bubble Bath (Chemical) Urethritis

With warm soaks, the pain and burning usually clear in 12 hours.

HOME CARE

Warm Baking Soda–Water Soaks. Have your daughter soak her bottom in a basin or bathtub of warm water for 20 minutes. Put 4 tablespoons of baking soda in the water.

(*Note:* Baking soda is much better than vinegar for young girls who have not entered puberty.) Be sure she spreads her legs and allows the water to cleanse the genital area. No soap should be used. Repeat this every 4 hours while she is awake for 1 day. This will remove any soap, concentrated urine, or other irritants from the genital area. It will also promote healing. With soaks the burning will usually clear in 24 hours. Thereafter, cleanse the genital area once daily with warm water.

Prevention of Recurrences of Pain with Urination

- Wash the genital area with water. Don't wash the genitals with soap until after puberty.
- Don't use bubble bath before puberty; it's extremely

irritating. Don't put any soaps or shampoo into the bath water. Don't let a bar of soap float in the bathtub. If you are going to shampoo your child's hair, do this at the end of the bath.

- Keep bath time less than 15 minutes. Have your child urinate immediately after baths.
- Teach your daughter to wipe herself correctly from front to back, especially after a bowel movement.
- Encourage her to drink enough fluids each day to keep the urine light-colored.
- Encourage her to urinate at least every 4 hours during the day.
- Sexually active young women should urinate after sexual intercourse.
- Have her wear cotton underpants. Underpants made of synthetic fibers (polyester or nylon) don't allow the skin to "breathe." Discourage wearing underpants at night.

Instructions for Collecting a Midstream, Clean-Catch Urine Specimen at Home. If you are told to bring in a urine sample, try to collect the first one in the morning. Use a jar and lid that have been sterilized by boiling them for 10 minutes.

Wash off the genital area several times with cotton balls and warm water. Have your child then sit on the toilet seat with her legs spread widely so that the labia (skin folds of the vagina) don't touch. Have her start to urinate into the toilet, and then place the clean container directly in line with the urine stream. Remove it after you have collected a few ounces but before she stops urinating. The first or last drops that come out of the bladder may be contaminated with bacteria.

Keep the urine in the refrigerator until you take it to the office. Bring it in chilled (put the jar in a plastic bag with some ice).



CALL OUR OFFICE

IMMEDIATELY if

- The pain with urination becomes severe.
- Any abdominal or back pain occurs.
- Your child starts acting very sick.

Within 24 hours if

- The pain and burning continue for more than 24 hours after warm baking soda–water soaks.
- Your child develops any fever (over 100°F [37.8°C]).
- You have other concerns or questions.