



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.
- 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 one to two 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 for two to three 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.
- Steroidal 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 three days, despite treatment.

