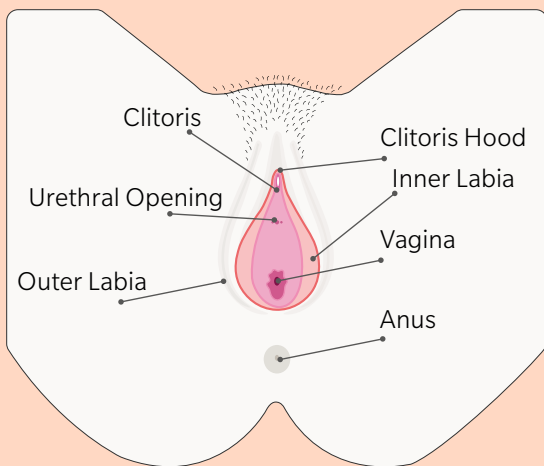


# ROCK MY MEN♀PAUSE

## VULVAL SKIN CARE

Top tips from our medical experts on how to care for your delicate vulval skin.

Words by Dr. Jane Davis & Lizzie McManus



**T**he term 'vulva' means the parts of the female genitalia that are seen outside of the body. It includes the vaginal entrance and the lips which surround it. It also includes the urethral opening (where wee comes out), and the clitoris.

It is more common than you may think to experience itching, prickling, soreness and dryness of the vulval skin. This can be linked to skin conditions such as eczema, or as a result of the hormonal changes associated with menopause, for example.

In order to care for this skin, think of it like the skin on the face, because it needs just as much looking after.

### DON'T



Use fabric conditioner / biological washing powder to wash underwear (use non biological washing powder only).



Shave/wax or depilate using creams etc.



Wear synthetic material trousers or briefs.



Use soap, shower gel or detergent to cleanse the vulva – this causes dry skin and makes itching worse.



Wear tights.



Shampoo hair in bath or shower (the residue of the shampoo will get to the vulval area).



Wear perfumed sanitary pads or panty liners.



Use bubble bath, oils or disinfectant in the bath.



Use spermicidal lubricated condoms or flavoured condoms.



Use over-the-counter washes for the vulva eg wet wipes, feminine wipes etc.



Wash excessively.

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## DO

1

### Use a moisturiser

Simple, unfragranced 'emollients' are available on prescription or over the counter. Use often as you need to soften and protect the delicate vulval skin.

2

### Wash with care:

Treat your vulva like a favourite jumper – wash gently and with a suitable product. Instead of soap and shower gel, choose an unscented moisturiser. Perfumed products can irritate. Bubbles are not needed for cleanliness and they also dry out the skin. This can lead to soreness. Aqueous cream is cheap, effective and readily available. However, richer ointments work really well. Take a little in the palm of the hand, add a small amount of water and mix to form a smooth cream, apply gently and pat dry.

3

### Leave 30 minutes between treatments in order to give different creams or ointments time to soak in.

This is important if you have been prescribed a steroid cream or similar product.

4

### Use personal lubricant:

Sex will be more comfortable with the help of some 'lube'. Oil-based products are most protective, but stick to water-based lubricant when using condoms (avoid perfumed or flavoured condoms).

5

**Wear cotton knickers.**

6

**Wear skirts or loose garments.**

7

**Avoid panty liners.**

8

**Use a simple barrier cream if sore.**

9

### Safety warning:

Some emollients can be flammable, so take care.

10

**Be aware of infections such as bacterial vaginosis and thrush and ask for advice on how to treat them and prevent recurrence.**

11

**Seek medical assistance if symptoms are not settling.**

Watch for worsening irritation, rashes or new symptoms.