

## NON-HORMONAL VAGINAL MOISTURE/LUBRICANT OPTIONS

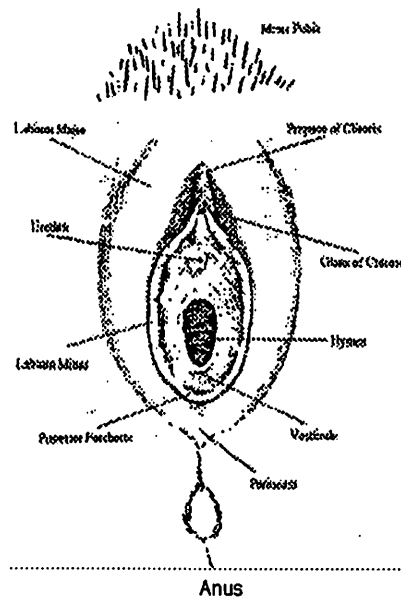
PRODUCT	Sold w/ Applicator?	Web Site	Where to Buy
Replens	YES*	replens.com	Walgreens, Rite-Aid, amazon.com
RepHresh	YES*	rephresh.com	Wagreens, Walmart, CVS, Target, Safeway, multiple online retailers
Luvena	YES*	luvenacare.com	Walgreens, Walmart, Rite-Aid, CVS, ShopRite, multiple online retailers
Astroglide (both water based and silicone based lubricants)	NO	astroglide.com	Walgreens, Walmart, Wegman's, Target, CVS, Rite-Aid, online retailers

Other options: *baby oil* (lubricant); *coconut oil* (lubricant or for daily moisture)

\*Products with applicators can be used 3 times per week to maintain vaginal moisture and normal pH; they should be used regularly regardless of whether or not you plan to have intercourse. You can lubricate the applicator tip with the same agent to minimize insertion irritation.

## The Vulvar Self-Exam

Just as you would examine your breasts or skin for changes, you should examine your vulva. Many diseases of the vulva have similar symptoms. The vulvar self-exam will help you to be aware of any changes in the vulvar area that may need ongoing evaluation. Some changes in the vulva may mean cancer. Tell your health care provider if you see any changes or have symptoms that don't go away, such as itching, bleeding or discomfort. If a problem does occur, catching it at an early stage—when treatment is most successful—is in your best interest. Learning how to do a vulvar self-exam can best accomplish this.



1. Wash your hands carefully before you begin.  
Lie or sit up in a comfortable position with good lighting and a hand mirror (a magnifying mirror may work best). It may help to prop up your back with pillows, or you can squat or kneel. Finding a comfortable position is important so you can clearly see the vulvar area, perineum, and anus. First, just look and learn. Things may appear different from what you expect, and that does not necessarily mean they are abnormal.
2. Gently separate the outer lips of the vulva. Look for any redness, swelling, dark or light spots, blisters, bumps or other unusual colors.
3. Next, separate the inner lips and look carefully at the area between them for the same changes. Also, look at the entrance of the vagina.
4. Gently pull back the skin covering the clitoris and examine the area under the hood at the tip of the clitoris.
5. Be sure also to inspect the area around the urethra, the perineum, the anus, the outside of the labia majora and the mons pubis.



## **GENITAL CARE FOR WOMEN**

### **What is it?**

Genital care means the way in which women keep their genital area healthy. This part of the body (the vulva)\* is made up of skin, moist areas and glands. Secretions (moistness) from the vagina keep it clean and healthy and these secretions are normal. These secretions protect the vagina and the skin.

### **Are there any problems with washing the genitals?**

Yes. The skin and moist surfaces of this part of the body are very delicate. It is important not to wash with harsh chemicals that may irritate the area. Washing too often, or rubbing too hard when drying, can irritate this skin. If you have problems in this area, washing with plain, lukewarm (not hot) water is best. Using soap, shower gels and some cleansers can make the problems worse. Your health care provider may be able to suggest a soap substitute.

### **What is the best way of keeping myself "clean"?**

Gently separate the outer "lips" and bathe the inner skin with plain water, using your hands only. Gently pat dry the outer skin. Do not use a hair dryer.

### **What about clothing?**

Wear well fitting clothing and avoid thongs, girdles, tight jeans and hose. Wash underclothes in a mild detergent and avoid fabric softeners.

### **What is best to use for my period?**

Disposable menstrual pads and tampons can be used. The best ones are natural cotton or hypoallergenic products. Remember to use ones that fit properly and change them regularly.

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### **What else should I know?**

It is not necessary to wash the vulva every day and it should not be washed more than once a day. Do not wash the vagina. Do not use wipes, deodorants, douches or other cosmetic and cleansing products. Women with a problem in this area should use only treatments prescribed by their health care provider.

\*You can find more information about the vulva in the information leaflet 'The Normal Vulva' on this website.