

## Vulvodynia

Vulvodynia (also referred to as vulvar vestibulitis) is a condition involving chronic pain in a woman's vulva (the area of the labia and around the opening of the vagina). The specific cause of vulvodynia is unknown; it is believed to have a multifactorial etiology. Some of these factors include the following: damage or irritation of the nerves of the vulva, inflammation of the area, long-term reactions to certain infections, sensitivity to certain foods, and dysfunction of the muscles of the pelvic floor.

The pain can go on for months or years. Research suggests that it can affect women of any age and can result from a variety of causes. However, pain caused by an infection, skin disorder, or other medical condition rules out vulvodynia.

### SYMPTOMS

Those who suffer from vulvodynia experience pain that they describe as burning, rawness, dryness and irritation that interferes with activities of daily living, including: sitting, wearing jeans or tight pants, using tampons and sexual intercourse. The onset of pain may be exact or nonspecific, come and go without warning, or be provoked only when the affected area is touched. The pain may be specific to a certain area or more generalized throughout the vulva.

### TREATMENT

Even though there is no known cause or specific cure for vulvodynia, there are many treatment approaches available to restore comfort for women with this condition.

Over-the-counter meds offer short-term relief:

- Antihistamines like Allegra® can be taken to offset itching.
- Moisturizers, like coconut oil, vitamin E, Aquaphor®, Replens® and Luvena® may be applied to aid in soothing relief.
- Local anesthetics, such as generic lidocaine ointment may numb the pain, but can cause some initial brief burning.
- Combination therapy can be achieved with the use of Vagisil Anti-itch Creme® (beneficial anti-itch and moisturizer in one).



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#### Additional treatment options:

- Oral or topical neurologic medications
- Topical hormonal medications
- Pelvic floor physical therapy
- Vulvar and vaginal laser treatments
- Injections of anesthetics, stem cell products, and/or Botox®
- Minor surgery

To discuss which form of management is best for you, schedule a visit with one of our specialized providers.