



BALANITIS

What is balanitis?

Balanitis is an inflammation of the foreskin or head of the penis. Balanitis is a common condition that mostly affects those who are uncircumcised. Although it can be painful, it is not a serious condition. It is usually relieved using topical medication.

What causes balanitis?

- The main cause of balanitis is poor hygiene. Poor hygiene can lead to an overgrowth of bacteria and yeast, which can cause an infection. The foreskin of the penis is an ideal place for bacteria and yeast to grow.
- Irritation caused by personal products such as:
 - Scented soap to clean the penis
 - Bar soap that dries out the skin
 - Scented lotions or sprays on the penis
- Medication you are taking may cause balanitis as a side effect, such as:
 - Laxatives, sleeping pills, painkillers and antibiotics
- Less common causes of balanitis are:
 - Reactive arthritis
 - Uncontrolled diabetes
 - Sexually transmitted infections, such as herpes and gonorrhea

Signs and symptoms of balanitis

- Redness, irritation and soreness of the head of the penis or under the foreskin
- Itching or burning in the affected area
- A white or yellowish thick, clumpy secretion from under the foreskin
- Painful skin on the penis
- Swelling can put pressure on the urethra, causing painful urination

How is balanitis diagnosed?

Balanitis can be diagnosed by a visual exam of the genital area.

How is balanitis treated?

- If you have a yeast infection, you may be advised to use an antifungal cream such as clotrimazole. Apply the cream to the affected area two to three times daily for 10 days. Your health care provider may also recommend a prescribed antifungal treatment, in a cream or pill form.
- If you have a bacterial skin infection, you may be advised to use an antibiotic cream and to keep the area clean and dry.

- Avoid using irritants such as perfumed soap, lotion, or powder as these products may further irritate the foreskin.

Are there any consequences to balanitis?

- Early diagnosis and treatment is the best way to reduce your chances of developing complications including:
 - Scarring in the penis opening
 - Painful foreskin retraction
 - Inadequate blood supply to the penis
 - Allergic dermatitis (allergic skin reaction)

How to prevent balanitis

- Good hygiene
- Avoiding using irritants such as perfumed soap, lotion, or powder to prevent further irritation of the foreskin
- Completely drying the penis after you shower

Call the **Sexual Health Infoline Ontario** at 1-800-668-2437 if you have questions or need help.

Sexual Health Clinic

179 Clarence St,

Ottawa. ON K1N5P7

613-234-4641 | TTY: 613-580-9656

OttawaPublicHealth.ca