Female Hygiene

Keeping your body clean will help you stay healthy. An important part of the female body is the vulva – the area where urine and menstrual blood come from. Keeping this part of your body clean may help to prevent bladder infections, yeast infections, and other uncomfortable conditions.

Here are some ways you can keep yourself clean:

1. After you urinate, wipe and dry yourself completely. Wiping from front to back can prevent germs from getting up into the bladder. These germs can cause bladder infections.
2. Go to the bathroom as soon as you know you need to go. Avoid holding urine in the bladder.
3. Avoid using colored or scented toilet paper.
4. Cotton underwear is the best for keeping you dry. If your underwear becomes damp, change into a dry pair as soon as possible.
5. Tight-fitting jeans, shorts, pantyhose, leggings, and tights can trap moisture close to your body. This can be irritating and can lead to yeast infections.
6. Bubble baths and some soaps can be irritating to the vulva. Use only mild soaps like Dove®.
7. Douching is NOT recommended. Douches can wash away the bacteria that help to keep you healthy. This can lead to other infections.
8. Wash the vulva every day with soap and water. Make sure to wash between all the folds of the skin and rinse away all soap. Dry completely, making sure you get between the folds of the skin.
9. If menstruating (having your period), avoid using deodorant pads or tampons. A tampon should not be left in the vagina for more than 4 to 8 hours at a time.

Call your health care provider or the Children’s Mercy Hospital Information Line at (816) 234-3188 if you have:

- Burning or pain when going to the bathroom
- A fever greater than 101°F (38.3°C)
- Discharge from your vagina
- Itching from your vagina or anus
- Abdominal pain
- Questions or concerns about your health