



Authoritative facts about the skin from the [New Zealand Dermatological Society Incorporated](#).

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Genital skin problems

Genital skin problems are very common and can be very uncomfortable, distressing and embarrassing. They can interfere with sexual functioning, self-image and interpersonal relationships. Some genital disorders are infectious, including sexually transmitted diseases.

This page provides links to information on DermNet about skin conditions affecting the genital area.

Many skin conditions result in itching ([pruritus](#)):

- [Pruritus ani](#)
- Pruritus vulvae in [women](#) and in [children](#)

Itch is commonly due to an [dermatitis](#) (eczema). The types of dermatitis most often affecting the genitals are:

- [Lichen simplex](#) (localised itch-scratch-itch response)
- [Atopic dermatitis](#) (widespread familial tendency)
- [Seborrhoeic dermatitis](#) (usually affects scalp as well)
- [Irritant contact dermatitis](#) (from wetness, incontinence, vigorous cleansing)
- [Allergic contact dermatitis](#) (most often due to perfumes or [rubber](#))

Other skin conditions causing genital itch include:

- [Psoriasis](#) (persistent red scaly or moist patches)
- [Lichen sclerosus](#) (white scarred patches)

Some conditions tend to be more sore than itchy, especially:

- [Aphthous ulceration](#)
- [Behcet disease](#)
- [Vulvodynia](#), most often presenting as provoked localised vulvodynia ([vestibulodynia](#)) or generalised unprovoked vulvodynia ([dysaesthetic vulvodynia](#))
- [Lichen planus](#) (usually also affects the mouth)
- [Plasma cell balanitis/vulvitis](#)
- Desquamative vaginitis

Non-venereal skin infections may present in the genital area, presumably because of warmth and humidity.

[Bacterial skin infections](#) include:

- [Boils](#) (deep infection of hair follicle)
- [Folliculitis](#) (surface infection of hair follicle)
- [Impetigo](#) (school sores)
- [Erythrasma](#) (dry brown patches)

An overgrowth of the normal vaginal bacteria, lactobacilli, may cause [cytolytic vaginosis](#).

Conditions confused with bacterial infections in the groin:

- [Balanitis](#)
- [Hidradenitis suppurativa](#)

- [Hailey Hailey](#)

[Fungal skin infections](#) include:

- [Tinea cruris](#) (Jock itch)
- [Vulvovaginal candidiasis](#) (thrush) and [cyclic vulvovaginitis](#)

Rashes confused with fungal infections in the groin:

- [Intertrigo](#)

[Viral skin infections](#) include:

- [Genital herpes](#)
- [Genital warts](#)
- [Herpes zoster](#)
- [Molluscum contagiosum](#)

The groin is also a favoured site for some parasitic infestations:

- [Pubic lice](#)
- [Scabies](#)

Important sexually transmitted infections include:

- [Syphilis](#)
- [Lymphogranuloma venereum](#)
- [Chancroid](#)
- [Granuloma Inguinale](#)

Skin lesions:

- [Angiokeratomas](#)
- Pilar and epidermal [cysts](#)
- [Penile intraepithelial neoplasia](#) (squamous cell carcinoma in situ, Bowen's disease of penis, erythroplasia of Querat)
- [Bowenoid papulosis](#) (precancerous plaques due to genital warts)
- [Invasive squamous cell carcinoma](#) (arising most often from genital warts, lichen sclerosus or lichen planus) and [vulval intraepithelial neoplasia](#) (squamous cell carcinoma in situ)
- [Extramammary Paget disease](#)
- [Peyronie disease](#), in which a fibrous band appears on the penis

[Related information](#)

Books:

See the [DermNet NZ bookstore](#)

DermNet does not provide an on-line consultation service.
If you have any concerns with your skin or its treatment, see a [dermatologist](#) for advice.

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