Balanitis and Foreskin Hygiene

Balanitis is a soreness and redness (*inflammation*) of the head (*glans*) of the penis. Sometimes there is a discharge and there may be a mild itch or discomfort.

CAUSES

- Balanitis is an overgrowth of *organisms* (bacteria or germs, and yeast) which are normally present on the skin of the glans.
- The condition most most often occurs in men who have a foreskin (have not been circumcised). This provides a warm, moist area for these organisms to grow.
- When these organisms overgrow or multiply, they cause inflammation. This is more likely to occur with poor hygiene.
- One common organism associated with balanitis is yeast. This yeast is known as Candida albicans. Balanitis may occur because of excessive growth of *Candida*, due to moisture and warmth under the foreskin.
- Treatment of balanitis is usually done by keeping the glans and foreskin clean and dry. Medications usually do not work as well as good hygiene.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Once a day, ideally when you shower or bathe, pull the foreskin back towards the body until the glans is uncovered. If there is resistance or discomfort with pulling the foreskin back, check with your caregiver.
- Wash the end of the penis and foreskin thoroughly using warm water only. Topical antibiotics, anti-fungal, or cortisone medicines may be used.
- After washing, dry the end of the penis and foreskin thoroughly. More thorough drying can be done using a fan or hair dryer.
- After drying, replace the foreskin.
- When you urinate, slide the foreskin back. This will help keep urine from wetting the foreskin. Following urination, dry the end of the penis and replace the foreskin.
- Good hygiene usually leads to rapid improvement in problems. Good hygiene will also help prevent further problems.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You experience repeated problems despite good hygiene.
- You develop a fever or are unable to urinate.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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