Urethritis, Child

Urethritis is an irritation (*inflammation*) of the urethra. The urethra is the tube that drains the urine out of the bladder.

CAUSES

Urethritis before the time of sexual development (puberty) is most often seen in girls. It is often caused by prolonged contact of the genital area with chemicals in the bath such as:

- Bubble bath.
- Shampoo.
- Harsh or perfumed soaps.

After puberty, urethritis may be caused by germs spread through sexual contact.

Injury to the urethra may cause urethritis. Injury can come from a catheter (medical tube for draining urine) or insertion of medical instruments or foreign bodies. Rarely, urethritis can be part of a disease with inflammation in other body areas.

SYMPTOMS

The symptoms of urethritis usually include:

- Pain with urination.
- Frequent urination.
- Urgent need to urinate.
- Itching and pain in the vagina.
- Discharge from the penis in boys.

DIAGNOSIS

Your child's caregiver may make the diagnosis by a physical exam. Testing may include:

- Tests for infection of the urine.
- Swabs from the urethra to look for infection.

TREATMENT

Urethritis due to irritation will respond quickly to home treatments. If an infection is the cause, your child's caregiver will prescribe medicine that kills germs (*antibiotics*).

HOME CARE

- Avoid harsh, perfumed soaps, bubble baths and shampoo in your child's bath water.
- Avoid prolonged contact with soapy water in the bath.
- Rinse the vaginal area after bathing.
- Shampoo in a shower or sink.
- Bathe in plain warm water to soothe the area.
- Offer plenty of fluids to drink.
- Teach your daughter to wipe front to back after using the toilet.
- Use cotton panties.
- Avoid panties when sleeping.
- If your child was prescribed an antibiotic, be sure to GIVE ALL MEDICINE or the infection may not respond.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your child's symptoms are not better in 1 day.

- Your child's symptoms are worse.
- Belly pain.
- Eye redness or pain.
- Joint pain.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION IF:

- Unexplained fever over 99.5° F (37.5° C) measured in the mouth (*oral*).
- Pain in the back or side.
- Repeated vomiting.

TEST RESULTS

Not all test results are available during your visit. If your test results are not back during the visit, make an appointment with your caregiver to find out the results. Do not assume everything is normal if you have not heard from your caregiver or the medical facility. It is important for you to follow up on all of your test results.

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