

- If you have recurring balanitis and have a phimosis, then an option is to be circumcised to remove the foreskin. If there are images in this attachment, they will not be displayed. Download the original attachment

Can balanitis be prevented?

Tips which may help to prevent some cases of balanitis include:

- Wash the glans each day. Pull the foreskin back gently whilst in the bath or shower. Then gently clean the glans using just water, or water and an emollient such as Dermol or Hydromol. Make sure the penis and glans are totally dry before you put on underpants.
- If symptoms are related to condom use, try using a condom which is designed for sensitive skin. (Ask your pharmacist for advice.)
- Wash underwear with non-biological detergents and rinse well.
- Wash your hands before going to the toilet if you work with chemicals which can irritate delicate skin.

For Further Information:

Phone the Department of Sexual Health on **01202 704536**, and ask to speak to a Health Advisor.

Alternatively phone NHS direct on **0845 4647** or visit www.nhsdirect.co.uk



The Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Balanitis

Our mission
Providing the excellent care we would expect for our own families.

Department of Sexual Health

The Royal Bournemouth Hospital,
Castle Lane East, Bournemouth,
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The Bournemouth Hospital Charity raises funds for the Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals to enhance patient care and purchase items which directly benefit patients and staff above and beyond that which can be funded by the NHS alone. If you would like to contribute to the Bournemouth Hospital Charity please contact them on **01202 704060**, email charity@rbch.nhs.uk or visit www.bournemouthhospitalcharity.org.

If you have any queries or concerns about your care at the Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) would be happy to help you and can be contacted on **01202 704886/704301** or pals@rbch.nhs.uk.

If you would like this leaflet printed in a larger font, please contact the Communications Team on **01202 704905** during the office hours of 8.30am-5pm Monday - Friday.



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Department of Sexual Health

What is balanitis and what are the symptoms?

Balanitis is an inflammation of the end of the penis (the glans). Often the foreskin is also inflamed at the same time as the glans. Balanitis is common, and it can occur at any age. It is not usually serious.

Symptoms include redness, irritation, and soreness of the end of the penis. It can range from a small patch of redness, to the whole glans becoming red, swollen and painful. Sometimes there is a thick clumpy discharge which comes from under the foreskin.

You may have some pain when you pass urine.

What can cause balanitis?

Infection

Various germs that live on the skin in small numbers may multiply and cause infection. The most common infection is a yeast called Candida (the same germ that causes vaginal thrush in women). Some types of bacteria are also a common cause of balanitis.

An infection of the glans is more likely to develop if you:

- Already have some inflammation of the penis due to an allergy or irritant (see below).

- Have diabetes. People with diabetes are more prone to infections, particularly candida.
- Have a phimosis. This is a condition where the foreskin does not retract (pull back) over the glans. You are more likely to get a balanitis if you have a phimosis as sweat, debris and urine may collect under the foreskin. This can irritate directly, or can encourage germs to thrive and cause infection.
- Have sex with a woman who has vaginal thrush.

Some sexually transmitted infections may cause balanitis. For example, genital herpes and syphilis.

Skin conditions

Certain skin conditions may cause a balanitis, or be mistaken for a balanitis. For example, psoriasis.

Allergies and irritants

The skin of the glans is sensitive. It may become inflamed if it comes in to contact with various chemicals or other substances. For example:

- If you do not wash under your foreskin, old skin, urine, sweat, and other 'debris' can collect there. This may irritate the glans and may lead to inflammation.
- Certain soaps and disinfectants may irritate your skin.

- Over-washing or scrubbing may also irritate the skin of the penis.
- Chemicals spilt on your hands may be transferred to the penis when you go to the toilet.
- Some washing powders or fabric conditioners that are not rinsed well from underpants.

Do I need any tests?

Not usually. Most cases can be diagnosed just by looking at the skin. Sometimes the doctor will recommend further tests if the cause is not clear.

What is the treatment for balanitis?

Treatment depends on the cause. Salt baths are soothing whilst treatment takes effect.

- An anti-yeast cream is the most common treatment as most cases are due to candida.
- Antibiotics will clear infection caused by bacteria.
- A mild steroid cream to reduce inflammation is useful for balanitis caused by allergies or irritants. Sometimes a steroid cream is used in addition to anti-yeast or antibiotic medication to reduce inflammation caused by infection.