

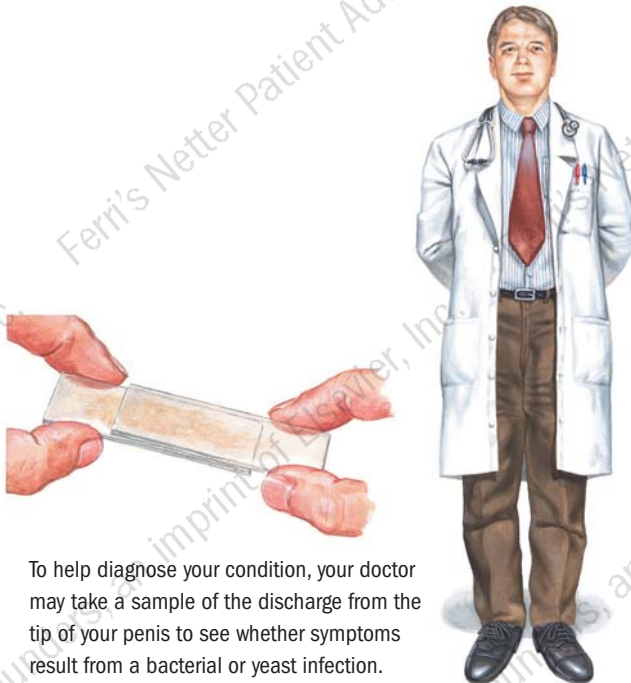
MANAGING YOUR BALANITIS



Balanitis is swelling and soreness or irritation of the head (tip) of your penis. It tends to occur more often in men who are not circumcised.



Common symptoms include redness and swelling at the tip of the penis, pain, difficulty urinating, inability to urinate, and foul-smelling discharge.



To help diagnose your condition, your doctor may take a sample of the discharge from the tip of your penis to see whether symptoms result from a bacterial or yeast infection.

What Is Balanitis?

Balanitis is swelling (inflammation) and soreness or irritation of the head (tip, or glans) of the penis. It tends to occur more often in men who are not circumcised. It usually occurs with posthitis (inflammation of the foreskin, the thin sheath of skin that covers the head of the penis). Together the two types of inflammation are called balanoposthitis. Circumcised men never have balanoposthitis because they have no foreskin. These common disorders affect men and boys of all ages.

What Causes Balanitis?

Causes include bacterial or yeast infections, urinary tract infection, sexually transmitted disease, poor hygiene, contraceptive foams or creams, injury or trauma, sexual intercourse, and allergies. Also, a tight foreskin can trap urine, bacteria, and other microorganisms, which can cause balanitis.

What Are the Symptoms of Balanitis?

Common symptoms include redness and swelling at the tip of the penis or foreskin, pain, difficulty urinating, inability to urinate, and bad-smelling discharge. The foreskin can become red, swollen, and tender. In untreated balanitis, the shaft of the penis may become involved, and blisters and ulcers can form.

How Is Balanitis Diagnosed?

The doctor takes a medical history and does a physical examination. In some cases, a sample of the discharge may be taken to see whether bacteria or yeast are causing symptoms.

The doctor may also do blood tests if a more serious disease, such as diabetes or syphilis, could be present.



Be sure to take medicine if your doctor prescribes it.



If your balanitis is caused by an infection, be sure to wear a condom during sex, so that your partner does not become infected.



Call your doctor if, after treatment, you have trouble urinating or if your urine has blood or pus in it.

Use creams as recommended by your doctor.



How Is Balanitis Treated?

Balanitis and posthitis usually respond well to treatment. Treatment depends on age, cause, and whether the person is sexually active and circumcised. Treatment involves retracting the foreskin and soaking the area in lukewarm water. Mild cases need an antibiotic cream for the area. Men with more severe cases or with diabetes may take antibiotics by mouth. If the cause is a yeast or fungal infection, a topical antifungal cream is usually applied to the area. Sometimes corticosteroid creams are given to reduce swelling. Surgery is rarely required. Recovery time depends on the cause and whether the person follows the doctor's instructions. In simple cases, symptoms may improve or even disappear in 5 to 10 days. In complex cases, full recovery may take longer.

DOs and DON'Ts in Managing Balanitis:

- ✓ **DO** use good hygiene, including pushing back your foreskin and cleaning the tip of your penis.
- ✓ **DO** wear condoms during sex.
- ✓ **DO** use creams or antibiotic pills as directed by your doctor.
- ✓ **DO** try a milder soap to see if it helps relieve symptoms.
- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if swelling worsens even with treatment.
- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if your condition hasn't improved in 3 or 4 days.
- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if you have trouble producing urine or if you see blood or pus in your urine.
- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if balanitis returns, and consider circumcision if you get balanitis or posthitis over and over.
- ⊗ **DON'T** stop treatment early, especially if you take antibiotics. Even if symptoms are getting better or are gone, you need to finish taking the antibiotic. Otherwise, your symptoms can return.
- ⊗ **DON'T** have unprotected sex while getting treatment.

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NOTES

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the following sources:

- American Urological Association
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Website: <http://www.auanet.org/>
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