

# Penis - Contact Dermatitis

## Definition

- Rash on the male genitals (penis or scrotum)

## Health Information

### Symptoms

- Red or pink rash on the penis, foreskin or scrotum
- Rashes on the scrotum also cause swelling.
- These rashes can be itchy.
- Poison ivy or oak contact can even cause blisters.

### Causes

- Most rashes on the penis or scrotum are caused by skin irritants.
- Hand-to-penis contact is normal when passing urine. Therefore, the rash is most likely from an irritant that was on the hands.
- Examples are plants (such as weeds) or chemicals (such as bug spray). Fiberglass, pet saliva or even food can also be irritants.
- Rashes are more common in the summertime. Reason: Children are outdoors and have more contact with plants, pollens and insects.

### "Summer Penile Syndrome"

- When the swelling and itching is severe, it is called "Summer Penile Syndrome".
- The foreskin can swell so much that you can barely see the head of the penis.
- The changes can come on very quickly.
- Cause: a substance that gets on the penis and causes an allergic reaction.
- Insect bites such as from mosquitoes or chiggers can cause it.
- Plant chemicals such as from poison ivy or pollens can also cause it.
- Treatment: no different than more milder rashes. Benadryl for a day may help reduce the swelling.

## Care Advice

### 1. Overview:

- Most new small rashes are due to skin contact with an irritant.
- If the rash is very itchy, it's usually from an allergic substance.
- Hand-to-penis contact is normal when passing urine. Therefore, the rash is most likely from something that was on the hands.
- Most small rashes can be treated at home.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

### 2. Cleansing:

- Wash the area once with soap to remove any irritants.
- Then avoid soaps. Reason: Most soaps interfere with healing.
- Just rinse the area with warm water.

3. **Steroid Cream:**
  - For itchy rashes, put 1% hydrocortisone cream on the rash.
  - No prescription is needed.
  - Do this 2 times per day for a few days.
4. **Antibiotic Ointment:**
  - For any cuts, sores or scabs that look infected, put on an antibiotic ointment.
  - No prescription is needed.
  - Use 2 times per day until seen.
5. **Try Not to Scratch:**
  - Help your child not to scratch.
  - Cut the fingernails short.
6. **Prevention of Recurrent Rashes:**
  - Teach your son to wash his hands if they are dirty.
  - Have him wash his hands before touching his penis.
7. **What to Expect:**
  - Small rashes from irritants should go away in 2 or 3 days with treatment.
  - Severe swelling and redness may take a week to resolve.

## Call Your Doctor If

- Rash looks infected
- Rash spreads or gets worse
- Rash lasts more than 1 week
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

### Pediatric Care Advice

**Author:** Barton Schmitt MD, FAAP

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