

# VULVODYNIA

PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE AT **920.729.7105** IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS.

## WHAT IS VULVODYNIA?

Vulvodynia is chronic pain or discomfort in the vulva. Vulvodynia may lead to vaginismus (a spasm of the muscles around the vagina) which may make having sex painful, and in some cases, impossible.

## WHAT CAUSES VULVODYNIA?

There is no known cause for vulvodynia; however, it is known that it is NOT caused by cancer or certain infections, such as HPV or herpes.

### Risk Factors:

- Infections
- Genetic factors
- Spasms of the muscles that support the pelvic organs
- Allergies to certain chemicals/substances
- Damage or irritation of the nerves of the vulva
- History of sexual abuse
- Overuse of topical medications

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Symptoms may be constant or come and go; may occur after physical contact with the vulvar area; may be felt during exercise, after urinating or even while sitting or resting:

- Burning
- Stinging
- Rawness
- Itching
- Aching
- Soreness
- Throbbing
- Swelling

## WHAT ARE THE TREATMENT OPTIONS?

### Vulvar hygiene

- Wear 100% cotton underwear (no underwear at night)
- Avoid tight-fitting undergarments and panty hose

- Avoid douching
- Use mild soaps for bathing and clean the vulva with water only
- Do not use vaginal wips, deodorants, or bubble bath
- Use lubrication for intercourse
- Apply cool gel packs to the vulva to reduce pain and itching
- Avoid exercises that put pressure directly on the vulva, like bicycling

### Medications

- Local anesthetics
- Steroids
- Antidepressants
- Anticonvulsants

## OTHER OPTIONS

### Diet changes

- Decrease intake of high-oxalate foods such as greens, chocolate, berries, beans and nuts

### Physical therapy

- Treats muscle spasms
- Teaches exercise that strengthen the pelvic muscles

### Biofeedback

- Trains you to control the muscles in the vagina

### Therapy

- A counselor can help you learn to cope with difficult situations and reduce stress that may be causing a number of painful symptoms
- Sexual counseling to provide support for you and your partner

### Surgery

- Vestibulectomy—removal of the painful tissue of the vestibule
- Helpful for localized vulvodynia
- Helps relieve pain and improve sexual comfort
- Not recommended for women with generalized vulvodynia

