

Let's Talk About...

Labial Adhesions

What are labial adhesions?

Labial adhesions is a rare condition in which the folds of skin (labia) surrounding the vagina grow together. These folds of skin can partially or completely block the opening to the vagina. Labial adhesions most often occur in girls 3 months to 6 years old.

What causes labial adhesions?

Doctors believe baby girls' labial adhesions are caused by irritation from wet diapers, infection, or harsh soaps. In older girls, labial adhesions are caused by the normally low levels of estrogen. A straddle injury (trauma in the genital area) can also cause labial adhesions.

What are the symptoms of labial adhesions?

Your daughter may have trouble urinating or be more likely to have a urinary tract infection (UTI). She may also complain about pain in the genital area. Sometimes, you may see a little red blood in her diaper or underwear if the adhesion opens up on its own. This is normal.

How are labial adhesions treated?

If you think the opening to your daughter's vagina is blocked, call her doctor. Mild labial adhesions may not need treatment and will separate as your daughter gets older.

Your daughter's doctor will first try to gently open the labia. They may be able to separate the labia if the tissue is weak. When the tissue connecting the labia is too strong, however, the doctor may prescribe an estrogen cream. You will gently apply the cream to the labia and spread them apart over a period of time.

Apply the cream for 3–5 days after the labia are separated. This helps the skin on both sides to heal. Sometimes the labia will grow together again after you stop using the cream. If you believe your daughter's labia have grown together again, call the doctor.

You may need to take your daughter to a pediatric urologist if the labial adhesions block urine. This is rare, and the doctor will separate the labia through surgery.

Questions for my doctor

How do I prevent my child from getting labial adhesions again?

Keep your daughter’s labia open after labial adhesions by helping her take a bath every day. Pat the vulva area dry with a towel after her bath. Then put a small amount of Vaseline™ or A+D™ ointment on the labia.

Do not use bubble baths or harsh soaps, and do not scrub the vulva. This can irritate the skin. Your daughter should also avoid tight clothing.

When should I call my doctor?

- If you believe your daughter’s labia have grown together again, call the doctor.

Notes

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