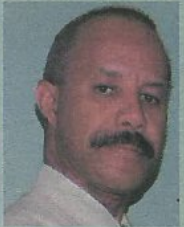




ASK YOUR DOCTOR



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Ask Your Doctor is a new column where Dr Alverston Bailey, a licensed Medical DOCTOR ANSWERS questions that you may have regarding your health and related problems you may be experiencing. Your privacy will be respected and your name will be kept confidential. Whatever health related QUERIES YOU may have you are welcome to write to us at North Coast Times.

Question:
I have a friend who had an erection that would not go down. He complains of a lot of pains in his penis. The doctor says it is Priapism. What is this?
What causes this?

Answer:
Definition - Priapism is defined as an abnormal persistent erection of the penis. It is an involuntary prolonged erection unrelated to sexual stimulation and unrelieved by ejaculation. Priapism is named after Priapus - the Greek god of fertility, the son of Aphrodite, the goddess of love.

Frequency - Priapism is common in individuals with sickle cell disease and occurs exclusively in males. It can occur in any age group. In patients with sickle cell disease, prevalence is higher in persons aged 19 - 21 years old.

Symptoms - Individuals with Priapism present with complaints of persistent erection for more than 4 hours. The symptoms depend on the type of Priapism and the duration of engorgement.

- ⊗ Low flow ischemic-type Priapism generally is not painful.
- ⊗ High flow non-ischemic Priapism generally is not painful

Causes - Priapism can result from idiopathic (unknown) or secondary causes.

Secondary causes of Priapism are as follows:

- ⊗ Sickle cell anemia and polycythemia
- ⊗ Thalassemia
- ⊗ Dialysis
- ⊗ Spinal cord injury
- ⊗ Cancers which metastasize to the penis or block venous outflow
- ⊗ Prostate, bladder and kidney cancer
- ⊗ Leukemia
- ⊗ Melanoma
- ⊗ Various drugs such as:
 - Anti-hypertensives
 - Psychotropics (major tranquilizers)
 - Anticoagulants (Heparin and Warfarin)
 - Recreational drugs (cocaine, marijuana, ethanol)
 - Hormones (Gonadotropin - releasing hormone, Tamoxifen and Testosterone)
 - Miscellaneous (metoclopramide, Omeprazole)
 - ⊗ Genito-urinary trauma
 - ⊗ Gout
 - ⊗ Carbon monoxide poisoning
 - ⊗ Malaria

In order to identify the cause and type of Priapism, a careful history and physical examination should be done and the following tests requested:

- Complete blood count and sickle cell test.
- Plasma thromboplastin
- Penile blood gas measurement
- Penile duplex Doppler ultrasonography - to help identify and locate a fistula in patients with high-flow priapism.
- Pelvic angiography to help confirm fistula location, followed by embolization in patients with high-flow Priapism.
- A chest radiograph if the history is consistent with a malignant or metastatic condition.

Treatment
All cases of Priapism require prompt consultation with a Genito-urinary specialist. The specialist might recommend the following treatments:
- Decongestant medications
- Aspiration of the penis followed by saline aspiration.
- If medical treatment fails, a surgical procedure will have to be done.

Yeast Infection in Men - "Crotch Rot"

By: Jovel Johnson and Marcella Richards

Yes, it's true. You should have learned by now that men can get yeast infection too. Not just thrush, the oral yeast infection that is common in men with HIV. Men can get penile yeast infections also called "crotch rot".

Men get yeast infections for the same reasons that women do, although the likelihoods are different. "Crotch rot" develops when the crotch is extremely moist and has no breathing room; there is no way for oxygen to pass through freely. Other risk factors for initial infection include wearing tight-fitting or wet clothing or undergarments.

According to Dr. Fiona Henry Pinnock, "crotch rot", medically known as Candidiasis, is caused by a unicellular fungus named Candida albicans. This affects men, causing balanitis. Candida is not classified as a sexually transmitted infection, though it is often caught by having unprotected sex with a woman who has vaginal yeast infection. A yeast-infected woman who has unprotected sex with a man can infect her lover, treat her own infection, and then get re-infected the next time they have intercourse.

Although far less common than sexual transmission, the other main cause of penile yeast infection is prolonged antibiotic use. These antibiotics can rid the body of the good organisms, allowing the normally occurring yeast to take over.

The symptoms of "crotch rot" are no more or less excruciating than a woman's symptoms. As a

matter of fact, some men who suffer from it "wish it would just fall right off." No wonder, as the name itself suggests it all.

The most common symptom is irritation and soreness of the head of the penis. It also often causes a rash that itches and burns, as well as cracks or becomes dry. After time, the skin will often peel and then return to normal, but the symptoms will usually reappear. Clumpy white discharge is another symptom, which does not promise to be a bed of roses. The head of the penis may turn red or develop blisters. Symptoms can be dangerously close to those of genital herpes, as little red itchy bumps are not uncommon with "crotch rot". Don't fret or fear, if you aren't sure what you are experiencing, go see a doctor for testing and diagnosis.

As with any other infections, there are precautions that can be taken to prevent the infection or re-infection of "crotch rot":

Wear loose-fitting, cotton boxers that allow your genitals to breathe. Choose any natural material. Avoid nylon or man made fibers, as they

tend to create moisture.

Avoid having intercourse or use a condom if you have a yeast infection since you can spread it to each other. If you or your partner has an active infection you should be extra careful to follow the safe sex guidelines until you are sure that both of you are infection-free.

Practice good hygiene, but also try to keep your genital area dry and perspiration-free. Wash, dry and change a couple of times a day if possible, and make sure you dry the area well. Moisture is a ripe playground for the bacteria

If none of these suggestions help, you should definitely seek medical attention. Home remedies aren't always safe or best and a doctor will give you the proper diagnosis. It is common knowledge that some men are afraid or too proud to visit a doctor, either because they fear finding out a sickness they never knew about, or they want to appear macho and strong. Trust us, it is better to be safe than sorry when it comes to your genitals.

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