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## INSTRUCTIONS FOR SELF CARE

### GENITAL HYGIENE

- ❖ Treat genital skin gently.
- ❖ While you have symptoms, clean only with normal saline solution (2 teaspoons of salt in 1 litre of water) applied with wads of cotton wool.
- ❖ When you are better, plain water is sufficient for hygiene purposes.
- ❖ Gently pat dry the outside areas only.
- ❖ Do not over wash the genitals. Never use soaps, perfumes, perfumed talcs, deodorants, 'feminine' products.
- ❖ Do not use douches (internal washing).
- ❖ Do not use moisturisers.

### PREVENTION OF SEXUAL PROBLEMS

- ❖ See a doctor if you feel pain during intercourse or have any sexual difficulties.
- ❖ It is important to explain your condition to your partner. Ask our help if this is a problem.
- ❖ Ensure proper arousal before penetration (which means you are producing your own natural lubrication and the pelvic floor muscles are relaxed). Teach your partner how to help you become aroused (he cannot read your mind).
- ❖ Seek out information if you need help.
- ❖ Deal with any stresses or marital problems as they will interfere with sexual activity and reduce the quality of your life.
- ❖ When you have recovered from your condition and wish to attempt intercourse again, it is suggested you adopt a position during intercourse which will allow you to control the rate and depth of penetration to prevent discomfort.
- ❖ Do not use artificial lubricants (such as 'KY' or petroleum jelly).
- ❖ Avoid intercourse when you are feeling symptoms or pain in the genitals.

### IMPORTANT POINTS ON THE USE OF MEDICATION

- ❖ Only use medication on the genital area that we have prescribed.
- ❖ If a flare up of symptoms occurs, a swab for culture should be undertaken *before* any medication is prescribed or used.
- ❖ Go to the doctor if you feel any symptoms, see any rashes or other changes. Ask your doctor to carry out the appropriate tests before changing treatment.
- ❖ Do not treat any symptoms yourself without seeing a doctor.

*Genital skin is very sensitive. It needs protection from chemical and physical damage*

*The genital area is also affected by the way you feel and symptoms can appear worse when you are stressed.*

**Figure 1.** Genital care.

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