

## What is vaginal reflux?



Vaginal reflux is a common problem in girls and results in wee being trapped in the vagina. This can lead to wetting when retained wee leaks from your daughter's vagina, particularly when she stands up, jumps, coughs or sneezes. The wetting can occur much later after she has passed urine.

## Who does vaginal reflux affect?

Vaginal reflux most commonly affects young girls but can occur in older girls or young women. It is particularly common if young girls have labial fusion (where the labia are temporarily joined), obesity and poor toileting habits which are described in more detail below.

## What are the symptoms of vaginal reflux?

Vaginal reflux can present with:

Wetness or leaking of wee after your daughter has used the toilet.

Vulvovaginitis (redness and discomfort around the vulva).

Offensive smell in the genital area.

Vaginal discharge.

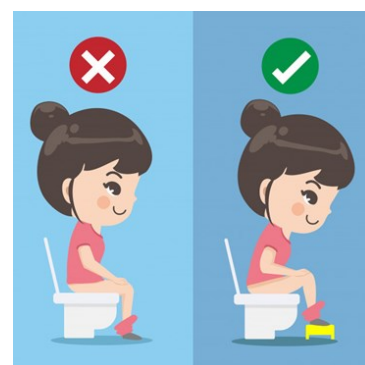
## How will vaginal reflux be diagnosed?

Usually the external genitalia will be normal when it is examined by a doctor, but there may be some

The external genitalia may look generally inflamed and sore due to irritation cause by the persistent wetness.

## How is vaginal reflux treated?

Vaginal reflux does not usually need specific medication and instead making some changes to toileting behaviour is generally sufficient to resolve symptoms. Encourage your daughter to try the following tactics when going to the toilet:



1. **Weight loss** – vaginal reflux is more common in girls who are overweight. If your child is overweight, sensible weight loss will help improve her symptoms of vaginal reflux. You can ask your GP or health visitor for further advice on weight loss for your child.
2. **'Knees aren't friends'** – many girls will sit on the toilet with their knees together when they go for a wee but this position can worsen vaginal reflux. Encourage your daughter to sit upright on the toilet with her knees and legs apart while she has a wee.
3. **Passing urine the opposite way round** – ask your daughter to try sitting on the toilet backwards, so that she is facing the wall behind the toilet and straddling the toilet seat itself. This will ensure a good position to help her empty her bladder and vagina more effectively.
4. **Rocking** – encourage your daughter to gently rock backwards and forwards on the toilet during and after their wee. This will help them to pass any wee which would otherwise be collected in the vagina.
5. **Double voiding** – when your daughter has finished having a wee, ask her to try to pass a little more. This will ensure that all the wee is properly drained.
6. **Wiping** – when wiping her perineum after having a wee, try pressing gently on the perineum. This can help absorb any excess urine that has collected in the vagina.
7. **Coughing or straining** – after your daughter has had a wee, ask her to try to cough or strain to help dislodge any excess wee that has collected in her vagina.



If your doctor has identified additional symptoms of vaginal reflux such as labial adhesions or genital irritation, emollients or oestrogen-containing cream might be helpful, but these would not be suitable for all children with vaginal reflux.

## What is the prognosis for vaginal reflux?

The symptoms of vaginal reflux can usually be significantly improved or completely resolved by following the toileting advice detailed above. In conjunction with these changes to how girls go to the toilet, their symptoms will generally improve as they get older and in particular as their anatomy changes as they reach puberty.



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