

Information about

Looking after your Vulva



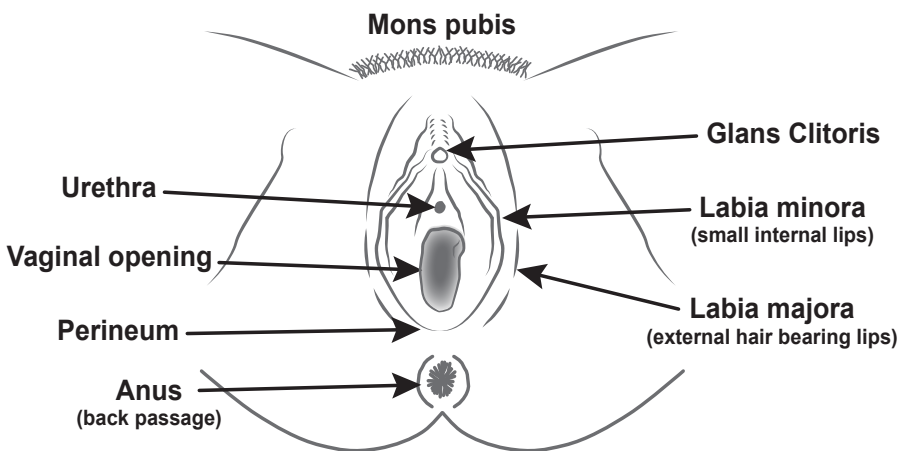
What is the Vulva?

Your vulva refers to the area surrounding the vaginal opening. It includes the mons pubis, labia majora and labia minora (inner and outer lips) the clitoris (one small part called the glans is usually visible), the perineum, urethra, vaginal opening and area around the anus (back passage)

Your vulva will change throughout your life. Some women will experience symptoms of itch, discomfort, soreness or change in colour or texture. If you are concerned, please speak to your doctor.

This leaflet will outline how to check your vulval (self-examination), and also some advice on how to care for your vulval skin.

Self-examination?



If you feel comfortable, you can use a mirror to check the area yourself. The diagram above shows the parts you can look at during your self-check.

If you need more help with self-checks, speak to your doctor or visit the self-examination section a  www.vulvalpainsociety.org

You should always let your doctor know if you have any ulcer, warty areas or bumps which are not healing with treatment or are growing bigger.

General Advice

Listed below are several things which you can do yourself to help calm down any irritation, itching or soreness of the vulval area.

Washing

- Wash the vulval area with emollients and avoid soaps
- Avoid over-washing or scrubbing with flannels or brushes
- Dry the skin area very gently (no rubbing) with a soft towel or use a hairdryer on a cool setting
- Do not use soaps, bubble-baths, deodorants, feminine washes or vaginal wipes in or around the vulval area
- Avoid using antiseptics or bath bombs in the bath
- Use an emollient ointment (moisturiser) after washing. Applying the ointment throughout the day will keep your skin hydrated and protected. You can also use it on toilet paper when wiping to help protect your skin.
- Take care when using emollients in the bath or shower as they can make surfaces slippery.

Avoiding skin irritants

- When washing your hair, avoid allowing the shampoo from coming into contact with the vulval area.
- If passing urine makes your symptoms worse, wash the urine away from the vulval area using a jug of warm water while on the toilet.
- If swimming or exercising, you can protect the vulval area with a barrier ointment.
- Use unscented unbleached tampons and sanitary pads and panty liners or period pants.
- Itch can sometimes be relieved by just holding the area tightly for several minutes.
- Avoid coloured or scented toilet paper.

Clothing

- Wear loose fitting, non-coloured cotton or silk underwear and change every day.
- Wash underwear using non-biological washing detergent and avoid using fabric conditioner.

Vaginal moisturisers and lubricants

- If sex is uncomfortable or your vagina feels dry, vaginal moisturisers and lubricants may help. You can use these daily or a couple of times a week as a vaginal moisturiser, and also as a lubricant during sex if it helps with your symptoms.
- You may also wish to use a local vaginal oestrogen therapy (cream, pessary or vaginal ring). Your doctor can give advice regarding a prescription and which product may suit your needs best.

Useful websites and further information

 www.lichensclerosus.org

Useful Contacts

Your doctor in the clinic today will have given you some suggestions about how to manage your symptoms.

If you have any concerns or questions, please contact your GP or practice nurse first.

Useful notes from clinic

Use this area to write any notes regarding your condition, treatment or contacts for clinic.

