

CANCER OF THE VULVA

Cancer of the vulva is relatively rare, affecting in the main women over the age of 60, although younger women can still present with pre-invasive and invasive Vulval cancer

The exact cause of Vulval Cancer is at present unknown but several risk factors have been suggested, including chronic inflammatory vulval disorders, Human Papilloma Virus infection, benign inflammatory conditions, advanced age, smoking and environmental factors.

Vulval Cancer can present with a number of symptoms. Whilst itching is the most common indication of an early cancer, it can also signify a number of non-malignant Vulval conditions and such requires the early attention of a medical practitioner.

The most common symptoms of Vulval Cancer is a mass or lump associated with itching. Other symptoms may include bleeding, discharge and a degree of Vulval pain and/or painful intercourse.

As a result of recent Government policy all women suspected as having a Vulval Cancer by their GP must be referred to a Gynaecologists and an appointment made to be seen within 2 weeks.

Treatment for Vulval Cancer includes surgery, radiotherapy and occasionally chemotherapy and is dependant on the clinical stage of the cancer. Treatment is planned on an individual basis, taking into account the wishes and concerns of each woman.

The overall prognosis for Cancer of the Vulva is very good, particularly if diagnosed early. Women should therefore be encouraged to undertake a self-examination and to seek early medical advice should they become concerned of any physical changes in the Vulva area

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WEBSITE

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**Awareness Saves Lives!
Please, Pass it on...**

**April is Vulval Cancer
Awareness Month!!!
Please Support Us!**

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DISCLAIMER

It is not the intention of VACO to give medical advice but to provide Ladies with information so they have a far greater understanding of their own health issues.

Specific medical advice is not provided in this leaflet and VACO urges anyone with worrying symptoms to consult a qualified Doctor for diagnosis.

VACO would like to thank Shewee for their support

www.shewee.com



A Guide to Self Examination of the Vulva



**Would you know how to
check for early signs of
Cancer of the Vulva?**

Because We Care!

Vulva Awareness Campaign Organisation

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Do you need to do checks?

If you are over the age of 18 years you should be carrying out Vulval self-examinations. In addition if you under 18 and sexually active, you should also perform checks regularly.

How often should you check?

Once a month, or any time you develop symptoms. If you have a history of Vulval problems you should perform Vulval self-examinations more frequently

What should you be looking for?

Changes in colour, increase in pigmentation of the skin covering the Vulva, white, red or brown. Thickening of the skin, new growth, warts, skin tags, moles and lumps. Breaks, lesions, ulcers or sores, persistent itching, inflammation or pain on the Vulva skin.

Getting help with problems?

Contact your GP who should examine you and prescribe a course of treatment. If this does not work or your symptoms return, go back to your GP. If your symptoms have not been resolved within a few months, your problem may need further investigation.

Sometimes your GP will refer you straight to a hospital specialist such as a gynaecologist or a dermatologist. If you have difficulty getting help from your GP and you can go to a Genito-Urinary Medicine (GUM) clinic at your local hospital.

Some hospitals have clinics dedicated to looking after vulval problems you will need to ask your GP for details of any in your area.

How to do your Vulva Self Exam

Find a comfortable well lit place to sit. Use a mirror and your free hand to separate your Labia Majora and expose the parts of your Vulva surrounding the opening to your Vagina. Once you have a good viewing position examine the main parts of your Vulva as follows:

Mons Pubis

Look carefully for any lumps, warts, ulcers, or changes in skin colour Then using your finger tips, check for any lumps just below the surface which you may not be able to see.

Clitoris and surrounding area

Look and feel for any lumps, sore areas or changes in skin colour

Labia Minora

Check both left and right labia for any changes in skin colour or lesions and then hold each lip between your thumb and fore finger, and check for any lumps.

Labia Majora

Examine in the same way as you did your Labia Minora.

Vestibule and Vaginal Entrance

Check for any signs of lumps, sores and skin colours changes. Make sure you check the skin inside the vaginal entrance.

Perineum

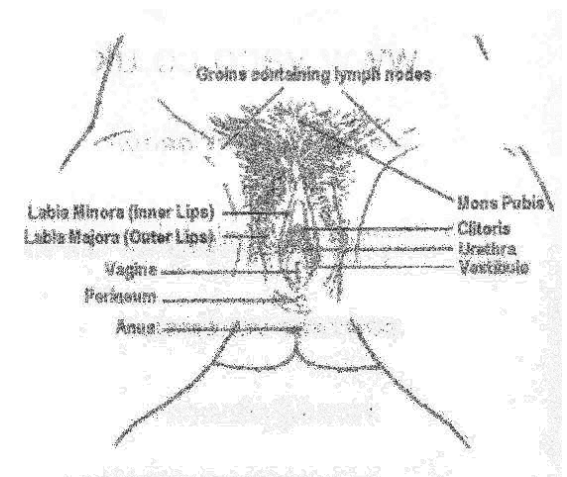
Examine thoroughly and note any abnormalities or changes since your last check.

Anal Opening

Check for abrasions, lumps and changes in the skin colour.

Vulval problems are most successfully treated when discovered early. Help protect your own health by making Vulval self-examinations a part of your own personal health care.

What is your Vulva?



The Vulva is the name given to the external genital organs and includes

The Mons Pubis

The mound of hair covered skin above the Vagina.

The Labia Majora

The Large Lips leading from the Mons Pubis down either side to the Vagina.

The Clitoris

The sensitive organ immediately below the Mons Pubis

The Labia Minora

The small inner lips leading from the Clitoris down either side to the Vagina

The Vestibule

The triangular area between the Labia Minora leading down to the Vaginal Entrance

The Perineum

The skin between the Vagina and the Anus