

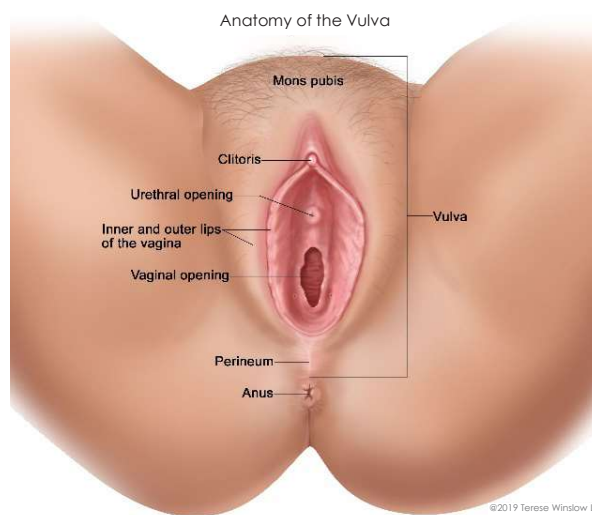
Vulvar Cancer

The vulva is a woman's external genitalia and includes:

- ▷ Inner and outer lips of the vagina
- ▷ Clitoris (sensitive tissue between the lips)
- ▷ Opening of the vagina and its glands
- ▷ Mons pubis (the rounded area in front of the pubic bones that becomes covered with hair at puberty)
- ▷ Perineum (the area between the vulva and the anus)¹

Risk factors:

- ▷ Older age
- ▷ Having HPV
- ▷ History of genital warts
- ▷ High number of sexual partners
- ▷ First sexual encounter at a young age
- ▷ History of abnormal pap smears
- ▷ History of other cancers (melanoma, cervical)
- ▷ Lichen sclerosis
- ▷ HIV
- ▷ Smoking¹



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Vulvar cancer is a rare disease in which malignant (cancer) cells form in the tissues of the vulva. Vulvar cancer often does not cause early signs or symptoms. The most common complaints may also be caused by other conditions and it is important to check with a doctor if you have any of the following:¹

- ▷ Vulvar tissue that is thickened, lighter or darker than surrounding tissue.²
- ▷ Itching in the vulvar area that does not go away.
- ▷ A lump or growth on the vulva that looks like a wart or ulcer.
- ▷ Bleeding not related to menstruation (periods).
- ▷ Pain in the vulvar area.¹



Testing used to diagnose vulvar cancer include:

- ▷ Health history of any reported symptoms.
- ▷ Physical exam to examine the vulva for abnormalities.
- ▷ Biopsy of abnormal vulvar tissue, sent to pathology for diagnosis.
- ▷ Imaging tests take pictures inside the body to see if there is a tumor. They can also show if and how far the cancer has spread. This may include an ultrasound, CT scan, PET scan or MRI.¹

Treatment for vulvar cancer will be individualized and based on physical exam, pathology results and imaging.

Treatment may include:

- ▷ Surgical resection to remove the abnormal tissue without any loss of the woman's sexual function, but is based on location. May require more than one surgery, depending on margin status and depth of invasion.³
- ▷ Radiation therapy uses high-energy x-rays or other types of radiation to kill cancer cells or keep them from growing.¹
- ▷ Chemotherapy uses drugs to stop the growth of cancer cells, either by killing the cells or by stopping the cells from dividing.¹

Ways you can reduce your risk of developing vulvar cancer:

- ▷ Obtain routine health screenings including well women exams and pap smears.
- ▷ Don't smoke or stop smoking.
- ▷ Practice safe sexual practices by limiting partners and using condoms.⁴
- ▷ Get the HPV vaccine – This vaccine is available for all boys and girls aged 9 and 26 and is approved by the FDA & CDC for adults aged 27-45.⁵
 - ▷ The HPV vaccine is not recommended for everyone older than 27 and is most effective when given at a young age, before exposure to HPV.⁶
 - ▷ However, older individuals at risk for acquiring a new HPV infection in the future with new partners, might benefit from vaccination.⁷

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