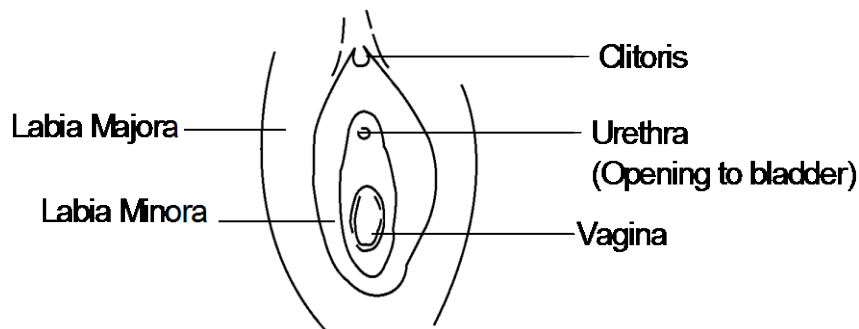


Vulvodynia

What is vulvodynia?

Vulvodynia means a sore or painful vulva. The vulva is the outside part of the female genitals. It includes the lips or labia, the clitoris, the urethra and the opening to the vagina. The skin is very sensitive in this area and contains gland openings. The glands keep the area very moist. With vulvodynia, the skin can become inflamed and painful.



What are the symptoms of vulvodynia?

You may have pain, itching, burning, stinging, redness and painful intercourse. Some patients have pain when they pass urine, because the urine irritates the sensitive skin. Each person's symptoms will vary depending on the cause of the condition.

What causes vulvodynia?

Vulvodynia may have one or more causes. It can be caused by a virus, a fungal infection or a change in the growth of the cells. Some skin conditions can also cause the problem. Sometimes it is not possible to find a cause.

How is the diagnosis made?

The doctor will use a colposcope to examine your vulva. A swab may be taken to test for infection. If a sore is present, the doctor may take a biopsy.

It is very important to tell the doctor about all your symptoms. If you know anything that makes your symptoms worse, be sure to tell your doctor.

What is the treatment for vulvodynia?

Your doctor will recommend a treatment for you, based on the cause of your symptoms. The treatment may include applying creams or having chemical or laser treatments. These treatments are done at the Colposcopy Clinic.

How can I make myself more comfortable?

Here are some things that you can do to get more comfortable:

- Keep the area clean and dry.
- Soak in a bathtub of plain warm water. Do not use perfumed soap or bubble bath.
- Dry the area well using a hair dryer set on low heat.
- Wear loose clothing.
- Wear white cotton panties. Do not wear panties to bed.
- Use white, unscented toilet tissue and unscented pads or tampons.
- Apply aloe vera gel, wet tea bags or ice packs to the area.

Extra stress in your life can make your symptoms worse. Talk with your doctor if you feel that counselling will help you deal with stress.

**Come back to the Colposcopy Clinic for your checkups.
Even though progress may be slow, vulvodynia does improve.
If you have any questions or concerns, call the Colposcopy Clinic:
Juravinski Hospital
905-574-8488 or 905-527-4322, ext. 42478**