

Vulva Clinic

This service specifically cares for women who have conditions affecting the vulval area, where initial treatment has not been successful. These problems are diagnosed and treated in the clinic using a multi-disciplinary approach. We see women with a range of different conditions:

- Lichen Sclerosus
- Lichen Planus
- Lichen simplex chronicus
- rare vulval skin conditions
- Vulval pain

What can I expect at the vulval clinic?

This is a specialist multidisciplinary clinic involving consultants from Gynaecology and Dermatology. Due to the nature of the conditions, you may also be seen by other specialists from sexual health and oral medicine.

You can expect to undergo a consultation, and examination, which will include looking at the vulval skin. You may be asked if we can monitor your condition with photographs, available via our clinical photography service. These would form part of your confidential clinical record and access is limited to clinicians involved in your care. We may need to perform a vulval biopsy, under local anaesthetic.

How can I access this service?

You will need to be referred by your GP. You will usually be assessed in a general gynaecology or dermatology clinic first, and if extra support is needed you would be offered further referral to our service. If you have previously been seen in this clinic, you can refer yourself back if necessary; this is called a patient-initiated referral.

Helpful Hints

Listed below are several things which you can do yourself to help calm down the irritation.

- Use a moisturiser such as E45 twice daily.
- Change underwear daily.
- Wear cotton underwear or consider wearing no underwear when indoors.
- Wash underwear separately using Lux Flakes and rinse very thoroughly.
- Avoid wearing tight clothing - leggings, tights, jeans and trousers.
- Continual use of panty-liners is best avoided - the plastic outer layer can cause warmth, dampness and irritation. Do not use any bath oils, perfumed soaps or powders - not even baby talcum or oils.
- Take special care when cleaning the bath. It is most important that EVERY TRACE of cleanser is rinsed out of the bath, otherwise a build-up can occur.
- Some people have a sensitivity to coloured toilet tissue; perhaps you could consider using a good quality white tissue.
- Any ointments prescribed should be applied sparingly over an extended period. Do not discontinue them as soon as the symptoms disappear.

- E45 cream can be used instead of soap; put a small amount on your hand and then using water, you can produce a light lather; it is non-irritant and also moisturising.
- Dry the skin area very gently (no rubbing) with a soft towel or use a hairdryer on a cool setting.
- Itching can sometimes be prevented / relieved by just holding the area tightly for several minutes

Useful websites

- The British Society for the Study of Vulval Disease (BSSVD): www.bssvd.org
- Vulval Pain Society: www.vulvalpainsociety.org
- British Association of Dermatologists: www.bad.org.uk
- Association for Lichen Sclerosus and Vulval Health: www.lichensclerosus.org
UK Lichen Planus: www.uklp

Confidentiality and Use of Patient's Information

For the purpose of your present and future medical treatment, details of your medical care will be recorded. Some use may be made of this information for research purposes and to indicate the kind of future health services which patients may require; some will be processed on a computer.

At all times great care is taken to ensure that high standards of confidentiality are maintained in respect of all information held. The "Data Protection Act 1998" gives you the right of access to any personal information which the Trust may hold about you, either in manual records or on its computers.

If you wish to apply for access to your data, or if you would like more information about your rights under the Act you should, in the first instance contact the Health Records Officer at the Hospital.