

Anatomy of the Vulva

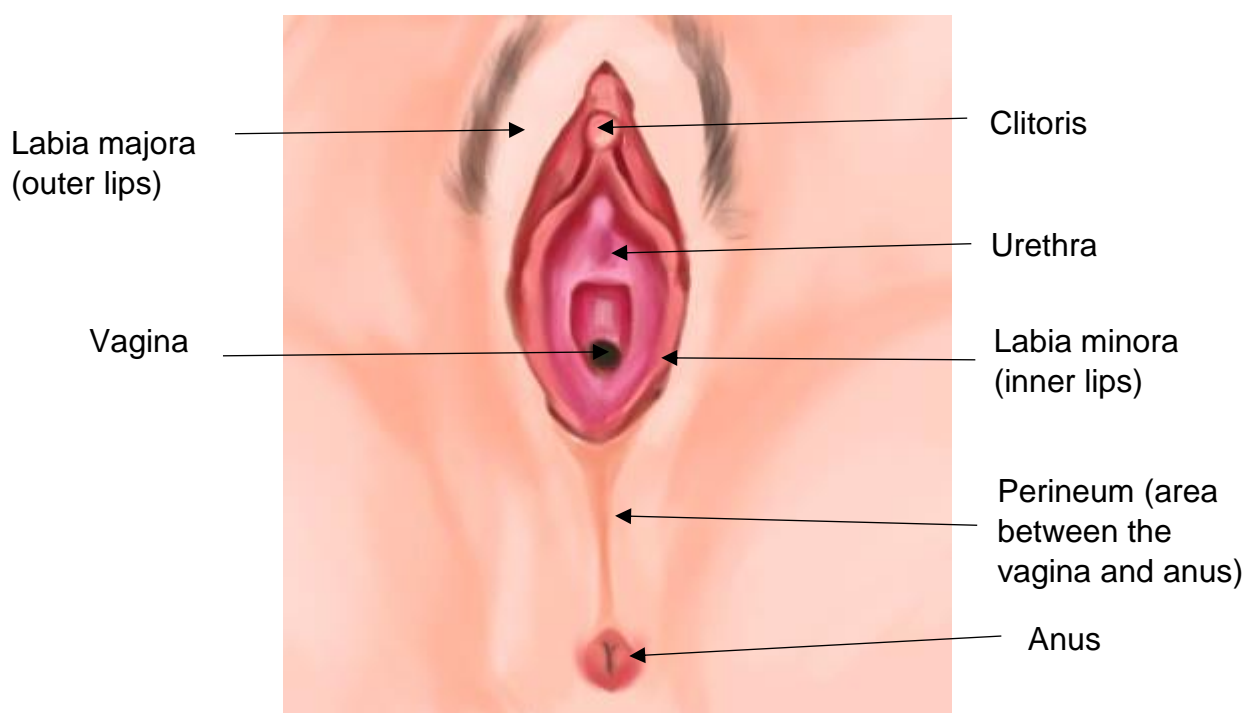
Physiotherapy Patient Information

Research has brought to light that many individuals both female and male have poor knowledge of the female genital anatomy. A study with 191 participants that explored this, demonstrated that only 9% of these participants could correctly identify all seven of the structures of the vulva correctly (El-Hamamsy, D., et.al (2022).

This leaflet is designed to show you the seven structures of the vulva to help improve your understanding of the female genital anatomy.

What is a Vulva?

The vulva is the area on the outside of your genitals, which includes the clitoris and the labia. The labia has an inner and outer set of lips. It does not include your anus or your vagina; which is actually inside, leading up to the womb.



Vulvas come in all shapes and sizes, and their appearance can change over time. An example of this is when going through puberty, when the labia minora, or inner lips, will grow and become more obvious.

There is a huge range of normal anatomy, but if you feel worried, or you think there might be something wrong, do consult a healthcare professional.

Useful links:

https://pcwhf.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/So_what_is_a_vulva_anyway_final_booklet.pdf

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/patient-leaflets/skin-conditions-of-the-vulva/>

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to call Physiotherapy reception on (01225) 821241. They will be able to direct you to your Physiotherapist.

Alternatively, you can email ruh-tr.therapiesoutpatientadmin@nhs.net
To access video links and further support, please visit the Physiotherapy webpage: <https://ruh.nhs.uk/patients/services/physiotherapy/>

References:

El-Hamamsy, D., Parmar, C., Shoop-Worrall, S. *et al.* Public understanding of female genital anatomy and pelvic organ prolapse (POP); a questionnaire-based pilot study. *Int Urogynecol J* **33**, 309–318 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00192-021-04727-9>



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Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital.

Email ruh-tr.pals@nhs.net or telephone 01225 825656 / 826319.