



Saint Mary's Managed Clinical Service
Division of Gynaecology

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

VULVAL EXCISION

The vulva is the term used for the visible part of the female genitalia. A vulval excision involves removing a small piece of skin from this area. This may be recommended if there is a bothersome area such as a skin tag or mole that is troubling you but sometimes recommended to treat abnormal cells in the skin.

The excision aims to remove the areas that are causing problems. If abnormal cells have been removed from the skin, then you will usually be advised to attend the clinic for regular follow up examinations to monitor the health of your vulva. It is important that you come back for any appointments that have been arranged.

WHAT TO EXPECT ON THE DAY OF TREATMENT

General Anaesthetic

If you are having a general anaesthetic, you will attend the hospital for a pre-operative assessment beforehand. The surgery is then usually performed as a day case. The doctor who is treating you will advise you when your treatment will take place.

Local Anaesthetic

If you are having local anaesthetic, you will attend an outpatient clinic. The excision usually takes 15-20 minutes, but you should allow approximately 30 minutes for the whole appointment. You are welcome to bring a friend, partner or relative with you and they can stay with you throughout the procedure if you wish.

You will be asked to undress from the waist down in a private cubicle. Local anaesthetic will be administered at the start of the procedure which can feel uncomfortable for a short amount of time but numbs the area very quickly for treatment. Once the area of the skin has been removed, dissolvable stitches will be used to close the skin. You will also be given a dressing to cover your vulva which can be removed after a couple of hours.

The stitches should dissolve on their own after about 2-3 weeks. If you still notice them after this time, please see your Practice Nurse at your GP surgery who can remove them if necessary.

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER YOUR TREATMENT

Your recovery period will be the same regardless of whether you had treatment under local or general anaesthetic. Whilst you are healing, it is common to have some pain and swelling at the place where the excision was done. The pain does not usually last longer than 2 weeks. You may find it useful to take pain relief and anti-inflammatory tablets, such as Paracetamol and Ibuprofen, during this time. You do not need a prescription to buy these medications, but it is important to take them as directed by your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

AFTER VULVAL EXCISION

To avoid infection whilst you are healing, wash your annds with soap and water before and after you touch your vulva.

Wash your vulva gently each day during your bath or shower. Do not use any perfumed products which may irritate the skin. Gently pat the area dry with a clean towel.

Do not have sex until the area heals. This could take a couple of weeks. You will be most comfortable in cotton underwear and loose-fitting clothes after this kind of surgery.

WHEN TO SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE

If you have any of the following you should seek medical advice:

- Offensive smelling discharge or heavy bleeding.
- If you feel unwell with a fever.
- If your pain is not controlled with over-the-counter pain relief.
- If your vulva is not healing after 4 weeks.

If you require any further information, including clarification of terminology, please do not hesitate to talk to one of the doctors or nurses, who will be happy to discuss your concerns with you.

CONTACT DETAILS

Saint Mary's hospital, Oxford road:



To cancel/change appointments or to enquire about your results contact:
(0161) 701 4455 (option 5) Secretaries (08:30 – 17:00)



For non-urgent clinical advice within hours, please contact the Nurse Colposcopists located at Saint Mary's Hospital, Oxford Road
(0161) 276 5485 (08:00 – 17:00)



Urgent clinical advice or advice out of hours please contact the Emergency Gynaecology Unit (EGU) located at Wythenshawe Hospital
(0161) 291 2561 (24 hours; 7 days)

EGU operates a telephone triage service, you must call and speak with a specially trained Nurse before attending