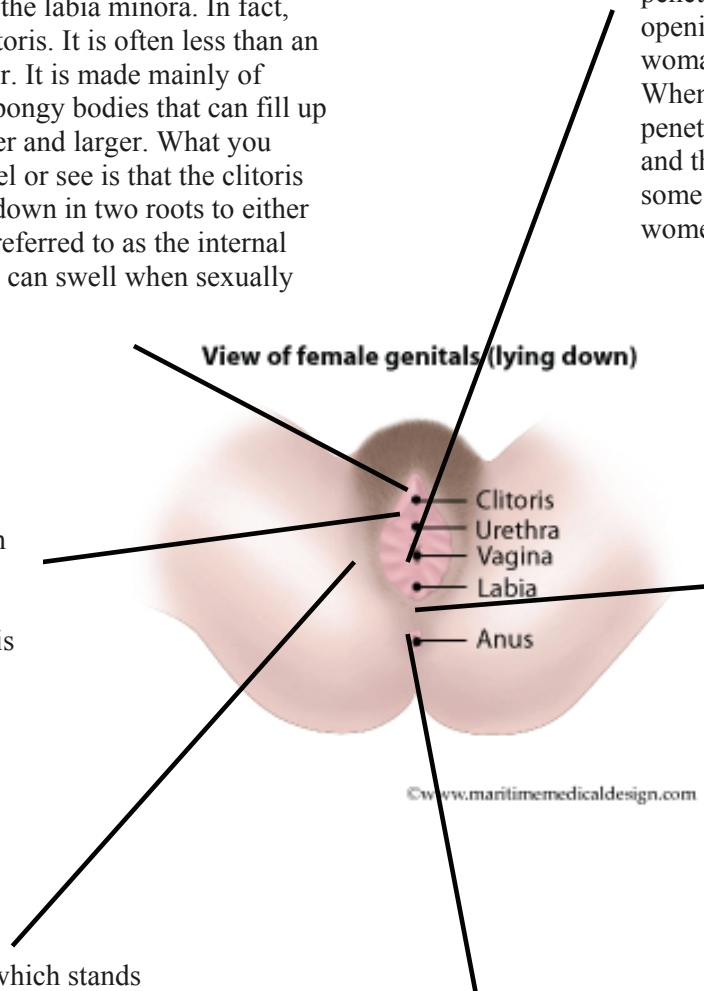


## View of Female Sexual Anatomy (front view)

**Clitoris & Internal Clitoral Body** The labia come together at the top into a little hood that covers the clitoris. The part of the clitoris which can be seen and felt (and until recently was thought to be the whole thing) sits under the top of the labia minora. In fact, this is just the tip of the clitoris. It is often less than an inch long, but can be longer. It is made mainly of erectile tissue, which are spongy bodies that can fill up with blood, making it firmer and larger. What you won't be able to directly feel or see is that the clitoris extends into the body and down in two roots to either side of the vagina. This is referred to as the internal clitoral body and all of this can swell when sexually stimulated.

**Hymen** The hymen is a thin membrane that partially covers the vaginal opening inside. Contrary to much mythology, the hymen is not a solid structure that is broken (or "popped") during a first vaginal penetration. The hymen usually has several openings and may change and stretch as a woman's body changes through puberty. When a woman first engages in vaginal penetration, the hymen can stretch and tear and this may cause some bleeding and some pain. But this isn't the case for all women.

**Urethral Opening** The urethral opening, which is where urine comes out of, can be seen if you pull back the folds of the labia. Some women find stimulation of this area to be pleasurable, some don't notice, and others find stimulation irritating. Erectile tissue also surrounds the urethral opening.



**Perineum** This is the area between the vaginal opening and the anus. During sexual arousal and excitement, the area may become more sensitive.

**PC Muscle** The PC muscle, which stands for pubococcygeus muscles, is actually a sling of muscles that support the pelvic floor and surround the internal genitalia. These muscles are involved in urination (when you stop yourself from peeing in mid-stream, you're using your PC muscles). The PC muscles are also involved in orgasm, and many women find that doing regular exercises to strengthen the muscles changes the way their sexual response feels. Exercises that strengthen the PC muscles are usually referred to as Kegel exercises.

**Anus** The anus may not, strictly speaking, be a sexual organ, but might be thought of as part of sexual the anatomy. The anal opening or anus leads to the rectum. The very strong muscle of the anal sphincter surrounds the rectum. The anus has many nerve endings and external stimulation, and is sensitive to even very light stimulation. Unlike the vagina, which is essentially closed on one end, the anus and rectum are open ended. You must be careful never to insert anything in the anus that doesn't have a flared base to prevent it from slipping up into the rectum and beyond. Bacteria that live quite happily in the anus can cause problems if transferred the vagina, the mouth, or the eyes, so touching the anus (inside or out) has to be done with attention to safety.