

View of Female Sexual Anatomy (side cut view)

Vulva

When people talk about their vagina, usually they are really talking about their vulva. The vulva is the collective term for the most easily visible parts of external female genitals. It includes the mons pubis, the outer and inner labia, the clitoral hood, the urethral opening and the vagina opening. There is a great variation in the overall appearance (including size, shape, and color) of women's vulvas.

Mons Pubis

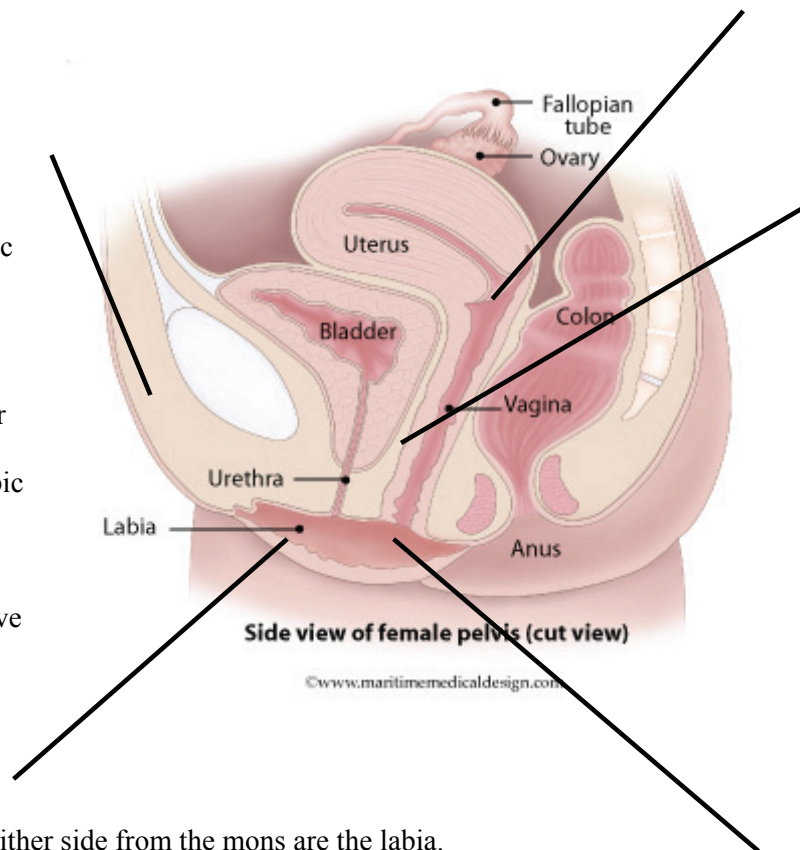
This area is also called the mons veneris (or mountain of venus) or sometimes just the pubic mound. It is the area of skin that lies above the pubic bone. It's often rounded and there is a fatty pad of tissue under the skin. The mons is where most of your pubic hair grows (some hair will also grown on the outer labia). The mons may be the least sensitive part of the vulva.

Labia

Coming down on either side from the mons are the labia. Labia is Latin for "lips" and women have two sets of labia. The outer thicker labia, called labia majora, are what you see without spreading your legs wide open. They will likely have hair on them and can be smooth or a bit ridged. In between the labia majora are another set of skin folds called the labia minora ("little lips"). These are much thinner and more flexible than the labia majora. The inner labia are often longer or seem to stick out more than the outer labia. There is a wide natural variation in shape and size of labia. Both sets of labia have nerve endings (more are in the inner labia though), making them a potential site of sexual arousal and pleasure.

Cervix

The cervix is the lower third portion of the uterus and forms the *neck* of the uterus that opens into the vagina. The narrow opening of the cervix, called the *os*, allows menstrual blood to flow out, and widens during labor to allow the passage of the fetus through the vagina during childbirth. The cervix has many nerve cells and it will also swell during sexual excitement.



Urethral Sponge or G Spot

This area is often called the G spot after Ernst Graffenberg who described it in 1950. A number of glands surround the urethra between the bladder and the urethral opening. Fluid is produced in these glands and may be released into the urethra during orgasm. Some women make enough fluid that they notice it, even to the extent that it is similar to ejaculation. This is a sensitive spot on the vaginal wall (at the top if you are on your back) inside the vaginal opening that swells during sexual arousal.

Vaginal Opening & Vagina

The vagina is a tube that is lined with membranes similar to those in the mouth; unlike the mouth, it tends to be ridged or bumpy. Most of the nerve endings in the vagina are in the outer third. The vagina is self-lubricating and usually a little wet. While the walls of the vagina usually rest against each other, when aroused the vagina can swell, and lubrication will increase.