

How often will you need to see me?

This will vary from case to case. Usually several follow up visits will be needed to keep an eye on your progress and check for any problems.

Where else can I get useful information?

The Vulval Pain Society
PO Box 7804
Nottingham
NG3 5ZQ

Email: inform@vulvalpainsociety.org

www.vulvalpainsociety.org/

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Women's Hospital Vulva Clinic

Telephone: 0121 333 9999
Ext. 5321/5319

We have updated our Privacy Notices in line with the data protection legislation (General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)/Data Protection Act 2018. For more information about how we use your personal data please visit our website at:

<https://bwc.nhs.uk/privacy-policy>

NHS

**Birmingham Women's
and Children's**
NHS Foundation Trust

Information leaflet on

Lichen Sclerosus

Vulva Clinic

Birmingham Women's Hospital
Mindelsohn Way, Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TG
Website: www.bwc.nhs.uk

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What is wrong with me?

You have been found to suffer LICHEN SCLEROSUS or LS. This is a skin condition, which can affect all people (including men and children). It's most common in women particularly after the menopause and usually affects the skin of the vulva but may affect the skin around the back passage.

What to do you mean by the vulva?

The vulva is the skin around the front passage (see diagram opposite).

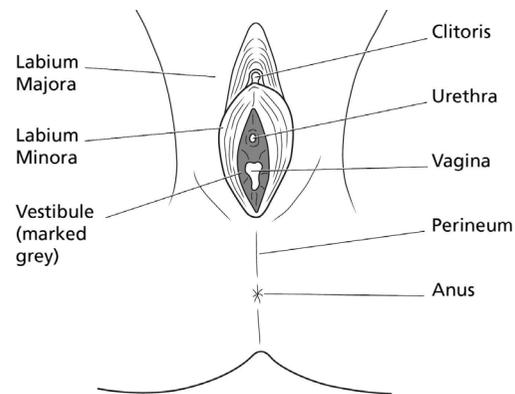
What causes it?

We don't know what causes LS. It is possible that it may run in families and there is a link with autoimmune diseases (where the body's immune system damages healthy tissue) such as thyroid disease or arthritis.

How is it diagnosed?

Some doctors can recognise LS immediately. Occasionally a skin biopsy (often using local anaesthetic) is needed.

The Vulva



What are the symptoms?

LS causes different symptoms in different people. The most common complaints are:

- Itching and soreness around the vulva (the skin around the front passage).
- Splitting and bleeding of the skin.
- Painful or difficult sex.
- Narrowing of the vaginal opening.
- Scarring of the skin (White appearance).
- Shrinking of the skin around the vulva.

Why is it important?

For 2 reasons:

- It can cause severe skin irritation.
- It is thought that LS can **rarely** turn

into cancer. This probably happens in about 3 or 4 women out of every 100 with the problem.

How is it treated?

There is no cure for lichen sclerosus. Operations are rarely of any benefit in this condition. We usually use a combination of creams and ointments to control the symptoms and stop the skin becoming damaged. **Steroid** creams are frequently prescribed and will normally bring symptoms under control. They work by reducing inflammation and skin damage. We may ask you to start off with a strong cream and gradually reduce the strength until you are comfortable. The symptoms of LS may come and go for no obvious reason. If they do come back, we usually prescribe a maintenance dose of cream to be used from time to time.

Is it harmful to use the creams long-term?

The instructions in your cream may warn against long term use or advise against use in the genital area. Some people worry that the cream will thin the skin. We feel that using the cream is safe and thinning of the skin does not seem to occur. The lichen Sclerosus if untreated, is more likely to damage your skin than the steroid cream.