

Vulva Cancer

The vulva is the external part of the female genitals, including the clitoris, the vaginal lips, the opening to the vagina, and the surrounding skin and tissue. Most vulvar cancers are squamous cell carcinoma. This type of cancer begins in squamous cells (thin, flat skin cells) and is usually found on the vaginal lips. A small number of vulvar cancers are adenocarcinomas (cancers that begin in cells that make mucus and other fluids). This type of cancer is usually found on the sides of the vaginal opening. Vulvar cancer usually forms slowly over a number of years. Abnormal cells can grow on the surface of the vulvar skin for a long time. This condition is called vulvar intraepithelial neoplasia (VIN). Because it is possible for VIN to become vulvar cancer, it is important to get treatment.

These are common symptoms in women who have developed vulvar cancer:

- A lump or growth in or on the vulvar area
- A patch of skin that is differently textured or coloured than the rest of the vulvar area
- Persistent itching, pain, soreness, or burning in the vulvar area
- Painful urination
- Bleeding or discharge that is not menstrual blood
- An ulcer that persists for more than 1 month
- A change in the appearance of an existing mole (this symptom is for vulvar melanoma specifically)
- Wart-like growths that are similar to genital warts

What are different vulvectomy approaches to treat invasive vulvar cancer?

- Radical Local Excision of the Vulva
- Modified Radical Vulvectomy
- Radical Vulvectomy
- Lymphadenectomy: this is a surgical procedure to remove lymph nodes in the groin in order to check for cancer

Vaginal Cancer

Vaginal cancer is a disease in which malignant (cancer) cells form in the vagina. The vagina is the canal leading from the cervix (the opening of uterus) to the outside of the body. At birth, a baby passes out of the body through the vagina (also called the birth canal). Vaginal cancer is not common.

There Are Two Main Types Of Vaginal Cancer:

- **Squamous cell carcinoma:** Cancer that forms in squamous cells, the thin, flat cells lining the vagina. Squamous cell vaginal cancer spreads slowly and usually stays near the vagina, but may spread to the lungs, liver, or bone. This is the most common type of vaginal cancer.
- **Adenocarcinoma:** Cancer that begins in glandular (secretory) cells. Glandular cells in the lining of the vagina make and release fluids such as mucus. Adenocarcinoma is more likely than squamous cell cancer to spread to the lungs and lymph nodes.

What Is The Common Risk Factor In Women Who Have Developed Vaginal Cancer?

Being aged 60 or older.

Being exposed to DES while in the mother's womb. In the 1950s, the drug DES was given to some pregnant women to prevent miscarriage (premature birth of a fetus that cannot survive). Women who were exposed to DES before birth have an increased risk of vaginal cancer.

Some of these women develop a rare form of vaginal cancer called clear cell adenocarcinoma.

- Having human papillomavirus (HPV) infection.
- Having a history of abnormal cells in the cervix or cervical cancer.



Dr. Richa Ashok Bansal, MS (OBGY), DNB, MCh Gynecological
Oncology (TMH), Ph No. 9769364195

Sr. Consultant Gynecological Onco Surgeon, Laparoscopic & Robotic Surgeon

What is the treatment of Vaginal Cancer?

The treatment of vaginal cancer depends on the size and stage of tumor. It also depends on the location of the tumor in relation to urethra and anus. Surgery is done in early cases and for advanced stages patient gets radiation therapy.