

Ground Rules

2 minutes

- Listen to and respect each other
- One person speaking at a time
- Openness but no personal stories
- No such thing as a silly question
- During discussions we have the right to pass
- We won't laugh at, judge, or make assumptions about anyone else in the group

Learning Objective

We are learning about:

- The anatomy of the vulva and vagina, and how a person can maintain vulval hygiene and notice when they may need to seek medical advice about vulval health

Intended Learning Outcomes

We will be able to:

- Explain the difference between the vulva and vagina.
- Describe the normal variations of vulvas and vaginal discharge.
- Describe the pressures that a person might experience to alter the appearance of the vulva through hair removal.
- Explain when a person may need to seek support about vulval health.

Resources Required

- Box for anonymous questions.

Keywords

Vulva	Vagina
Discharge	Variety
Your Normal	Personal Choice

Baseline Assessment

5 minutes

Introduce learning objectives, outcomes and ground rules

Ask students to create a mind map with “vulvas and vaginas” at the centre. They should write down what they already know around the mind map.

Core Activity 1

15 minutes

Play the [‘Vulval Vexations’](#) video.

Ask students to complete the quiz below.

What is the vulva and where is it found in the body?

The vulva is the external female genitalia that surround the opening to the vagina; collectively these consist of the labia majora, labia minora, clitoris and clitoral hood.

What is the vagina and where is it found in the body?

The vagina is the ‘tube’ inside the body which leads to the uterus. It is also where a tampon is inserted during a period.

How can the vulva be cleaned? Does the vagina need to be cleaned?

The vulva should be cleaned daily with mild soap and water. The vagina is self-cleaning and should not be cleaned because cleaning the vagina can upset the natural balance of good bacteria. (Clean ‘everything on the outside’ and do not clean anything on the inside).

What is discharge? Where is it produced and why?

Discharge is produced by the good bacteria in the vagina. It is slightly acidic and can stain underwear, particularly black underwear, it can stain red (consider showing ‘this is a vulva.com’ examples of discharge in underwear).

What is the normal amount of daily discharge produced from puberty onwards?

The normal amount of daily discharge is ½ to one teaspoon daily and it can change from cloudy to clear throughout the normal menstrual cycle. A person knowing what is ‘normal for them’ regarding discharge is important and if it changes in smell/quantity or colour, they might want to seek medical advice.

Why is pubic hair important?

Pubic hair protects the delicate vulval area and helps reduce friction from underwear and clothing. The base of the pubic hair contains oils that keep the skin moist and healthy.

What are the potential harms of excessively removing pubic hair?

Removing too much of the pubic hair can make the skin in that area dry, sore and prone to infections and abscesses. There are also bigger meanings behind removing pubic hair. Why might someone remove pubic hair? Excessively removing pubic hair to please a sexual partner may be a sign of a power imbalance in a relationship or media influence.

Core Activity 2

15 minutes

Head, Hearts, Hands.

Ask students to read the situations and suggest what the character might think in that situation, how they might feel, and what they might then do.

1. Keely has a new partner, who mentioned that they thought pubic hair was weird and laughed about people having it.
2. Ada’s discharge has changed colour a bit from what it normally looks like, she’s also feeling some itching around her vulva.
3. Yasmin has seen an advert on social media for a product that says it’s going to keep her vagina “fresh and clean”.
4. Skye is in a Science lesson, they’re learning about the body and there’s a diagram of the vulva in her textbook. She notices labia in the diagram look different to the shape and colour of her labia.

Guidance to support the teaching the scenarios above:

1. Handling pressure and speaking to a trusted adult if they feel the partner’s behaviour is unhealthy.
2. There can be some changes during a cycle but encourage seeking help from a doctor if there’s a change from her normal discharge.
3. Discuss managing influence around advertising, not needing to clean the vagina, challenging the language around “freshness” which implies the vagina is somehow inherently dirty.
4. Differences in how vulvas look. Visit <http://www.thisisavulva.com> to find some helpful pictures/teaching aids also.

Supportive Conversations

10 minutes

Ask groups of students to choose a scenario from Heads, Hearts, Hands and consider the following.

1. What might Keely say to her partner to help them understand her point of view?
What could a partner say to Keely to be more reassuring?

2. What might Ada say to a parent if she was worried and needed to see the doctor?
What might Ada say to the doctor when she had an appointment at the GP's office?

3. What might a friend say to Yasmin to reassure her if she shared her concerns about whether or not she needed the product?
What might Yasmin say or do to challenge the post on social media?

4. What might Skye say to a friend if she was worried about this and what might the friend say in response to reassure her?
What could the Science teacher say during the lesson to reassure all students about the diagrams that are sometimes included in textbooks?

Endpoint

10 minutes

Return to the baseline and make any changes or add any new learning in a different colour pen.

Extension Activities

Ask students to create a script for a public health advert promoting healthy vulvas and vaginas, they should dispel myths and common misconceptions about the vulva and vagina.

DO NOT FORGET TO GIVE EACH STUDENT THE FACTSHEET THAT ACCOMPANIES THIS LESSON (these are with the lesson plan downloads).