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It's a tough one.

We talk about sexual health these days in such open terms, but I feel that people just aren't yet ready to talk about gynaecological cancers.



I was diagnosed with a very rare type of vaginal cancer in 2009; there wasn't anyone I could talk to about it at the time and that was one of the hardest things to cope with. But it's with the help of charities like The Eve Appeal raising awareness of gynaecological cancer, that talking about it has become easier for me, and I hope for other women too.

Early diagnosis is key to saving lives and this is why The Eve Appeal is so important; to raise funds for vital life saving research.

I was lucky to have had an early diagnosis. Regular health checks along with paying attention to possible early warning signs are so very important. Make sure you know what they are and even if you don't have obvious signs, don't be afraid to ask questions at your next cervical screening – it's the perfect opportunity, believe me.

”

Mellissa Abbotts  
Vaginal cancer patient

## About The Eve Appeal

The Eve Appeal was launched in 2002 and is the UK's **only national gynaecological cancer research charity**. Our mission is to raise funds for research and to save lives from these diseases.

The Eve Appeal shares in a united vision with the Department of Women's Cancer at University College London. Our vision is simple: A future where fewer women develop and more women survive gynaecological cancers.

If you have any comments or suggestions for improving future editions please get in touch directly using the contact details below. To access our list of references, please contact us directly.

All information correct at time of publication

### Where can I get further information?

**Tel:** 020 7605 0100

**Email:** [office@eveappeal.org.uk](mailto:office@eveappeal.org.uk)

**Web:** [www.eveappeal.org.uk](http://www.eveappeal.org.uk)

**Twitter:** @eveappeal



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# the **eve** appeal

protecting women from  
**gynaecological** cancers

What  
women  
need to  
know...

...about  
**vaginal  
cancer**

signs &  
symptoms  
information  
leaflet



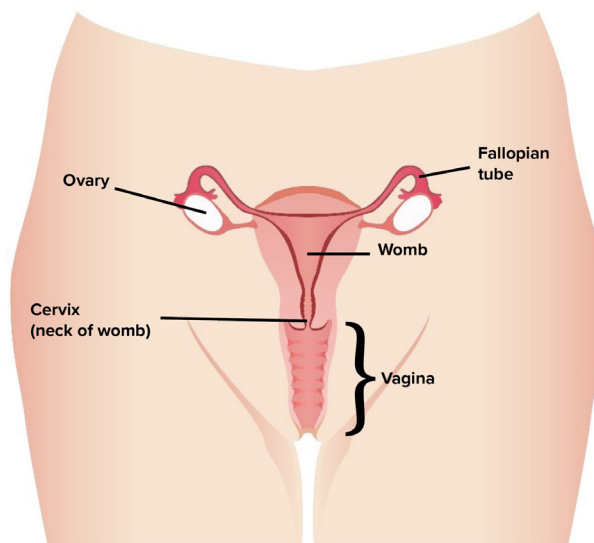
## Key messages for women about vaginal cancer

- ♥ Vaginal cancer is rare (under 300 cases per year in the UK ) and accounts for only 1% of all gynaecological cancers diagnosed
- ♥ The risk of vaginal cancer increases with age
- ♥ In younger women vaginal cancer is frequently associated with human papillomavirus (HPV) infection
- ♥ Many women with vaginal cancer have a history of cancer or pre-cancer of the cervix (or “CIN”) – often occurring many years earlier
- ♥ There are some very rare cancers that affect the vagina such as melanoma, which is a type of cancer of the skin. It can develop from abnormal moles which change in shape, size, colour or become itchy or bleed
- ♥ Researchers have identified causal links between vaginal cancer and cigarette smoking
- ♥ Vaginal cancer may develop from untreated pre-cancer cells known as VAIN

## Early signs and symptoms

- ♥ Bleeding after sexual intercourse or between periods or after menopause or abnormal vaginal discharge (vaginal cancer is a very rare cause of these symptoms)
- ♥ Areas of soreness or a raised bump on the vaginal skin inside and around the vaginal opening

## A woman's reproductive system



## Reducing your risk...

- ♥ There is currently no screening test to identify vaginal cancer. If you regularly experience any of the above symptoms or have a persistent area of change in your vagina, it is important that you see your GP
- ♥ If you have already consulted your GP but the symptoms persist or worsen, it is important to return to your doctor and explain this - you know your body better than anyone
- ♥ You can discuss any changes described above with your practice nurse or GP when you attend for your cervical screening. In the UK, women aged 25 and over are invited for cervical screening every 3 years up until the age of 49; then every 5 years up until the age of 64.

If you regularly experience any of the above symptoms, it is important that you see your GP. It is unlikely that your symptoms are caused by a serious problem, but it is important to get checked out.

## Get involved

Title..... Name.....  
Address.....  
..... Postcode.....  
Tel..... Email.....

## I would like further information on...

- The Eve Appeal
- Volunteering
- Leaving a legacy
- Fundraising
- Being a case study
- Making a regular donation

## I would like to donate...

I wish to donate £.....

- cheque (payable to The Eve Appeal) **OR**
- credit/debit card

Card type..... Expiry date.....

Card number .....

Security code (last 3 digits on back of card) .....

**Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 donated.**

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year.

- I am a UK taxpayer\*
- I am not a UK taxpayer

\*I want to Gift Aid this donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to The Eve Appeal (Gynaecology Cancer Research Fund). I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Signature..... Date.....

### Please return to:

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