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?

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Karen Pritchard
Vulval cancer patient

"It all started many years ago, as I have always had irritations in my vaginal area, but was constantly told it was thrush. It turned out to be vulval cancer.

I’m lucky I was referred to a specialist within my GP surgery, otherwise the outcome could have been a lot worse."

(V4 February ’16, Review February ’18)
Key messages for women about vulval cancer

- Vulval cancer affects around 1,300 women per year in the UK.
- The risk increases with age.
- In younger women vulval cancer is frequently associated with human papillomavirus (HPV) infection.
- Vulval cancer can also be associated with other skin conditions, particularly Lichen Sclerosus (a common dry skin condition often seen on the vulva and treated by dermatologists).
- There are some very rare cancers that affect the vulva 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 vulval cancer and cigarette smoking.
- Vulval cancer can develop from untreated pre-cancer cells.

Key signs and symptoms of vulval cancer

- Raised itchy or painful lump or bleeding area on the vulva, which may be discoloured.
- A painful lump or thickening of the vulva within an area of Lichen Sclerosus.
- Persistent area of sore, non-healing or broken vulval skin.

Reducing your risk...

- Examine your vulval skin regularly using a mirror and a good light. If you regularly experience any of the above signs and symptoms, 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.
- You can reduce the risk of vulval cancer by stopping smoking.

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.