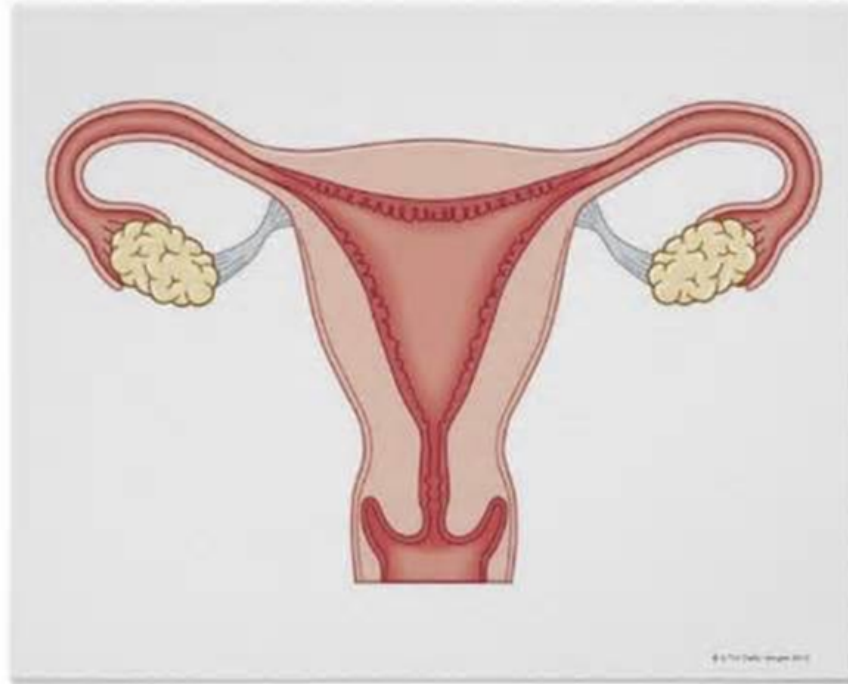


# The Female Reproductive System



Let's start with the internal anatomy.  
These are parts of the female anatomy  
that you cannot see from the outside of  
the body.

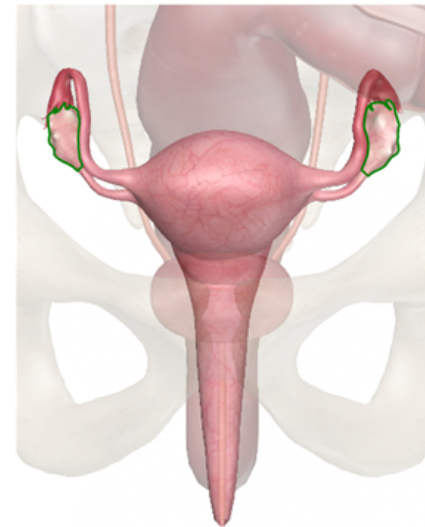
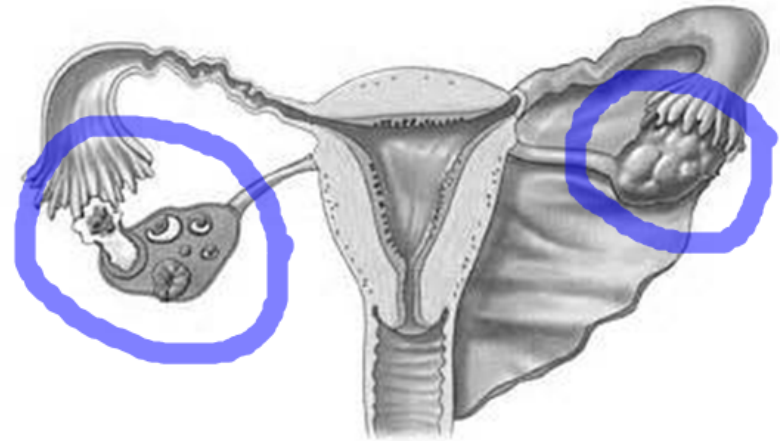
# The Egg / Ovum

- The female gamete / sex cell
- Has 23 chromosomes (all other cells have 46 chromosomes)
- Carries all of the genetic information that will be passed on from mom
- Women are born with all of the eggs that they need to last a lifetime (like 60,000...but really only about 400 are used)

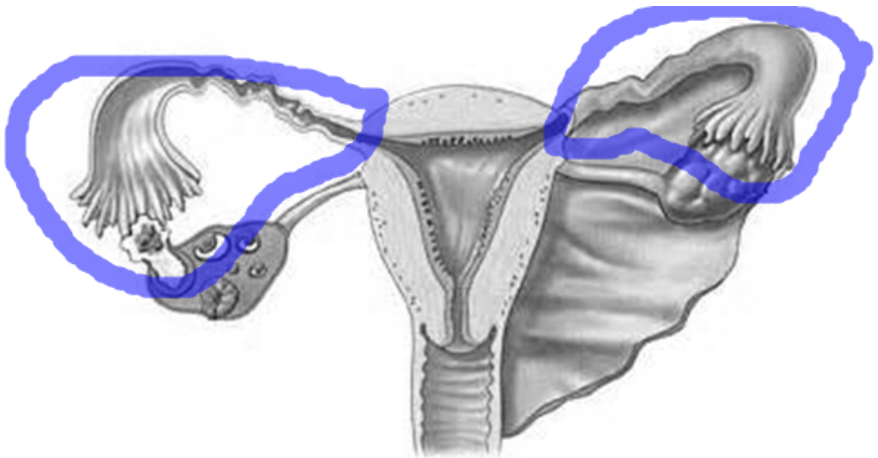


# The Ovaries

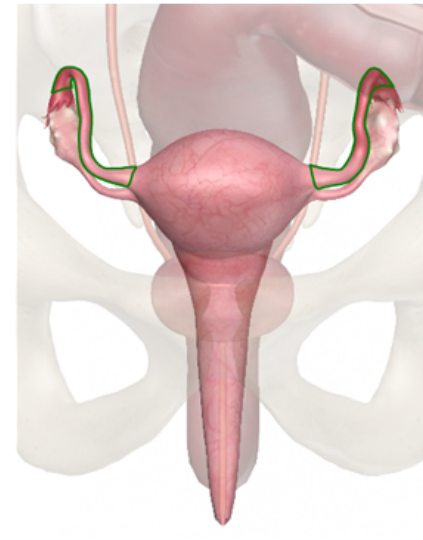
- Oval shaped (almond shaped) glands
  - Produce eggs
- When an ovary releases an egg this is called 'ovulating'
  - Produce the female sex hormone estrogen and progesterone
- Houses the eggs until they are mature and ready to be released



# The Fallopian Tubes

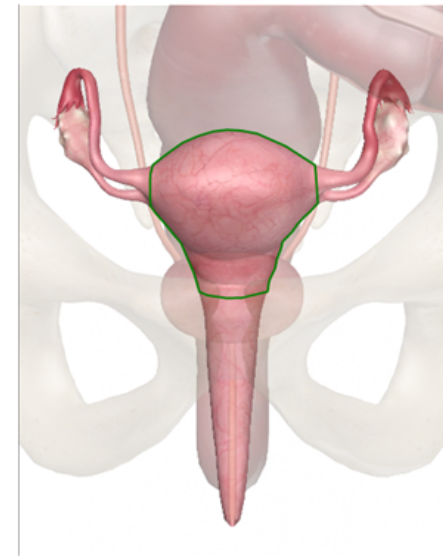
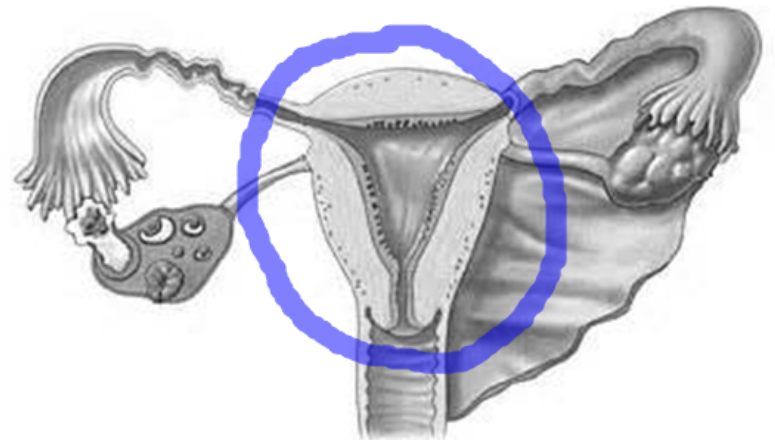


- 3-5 inch long tube that carries the egg to where fertilization (where sperm meets egg) takes place and then to where a fetus would grow
- The end closest to the ovaries has finger-like projections that force the egg down the fallopian tube



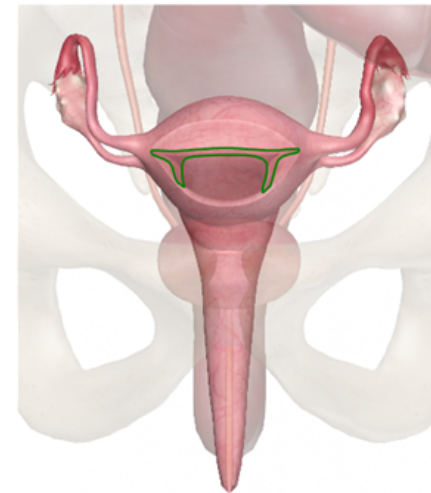
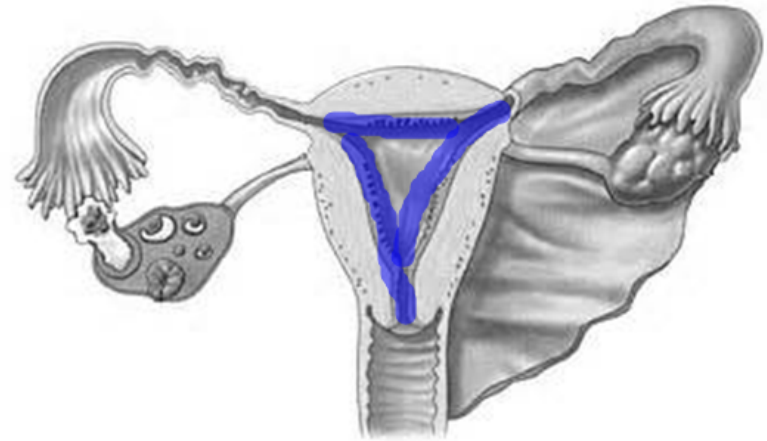
# Uterus

- Also called the 'womb'
- A hollow muscular organ where a fertilized egg would be nourished and develop until birth
- Located in the pelvic girdle behind the bladder
- The uterus is very stretchy (good for a growing baby)
- When a baby is ready to be born, the muscle contracts to push the baby through the birth canal



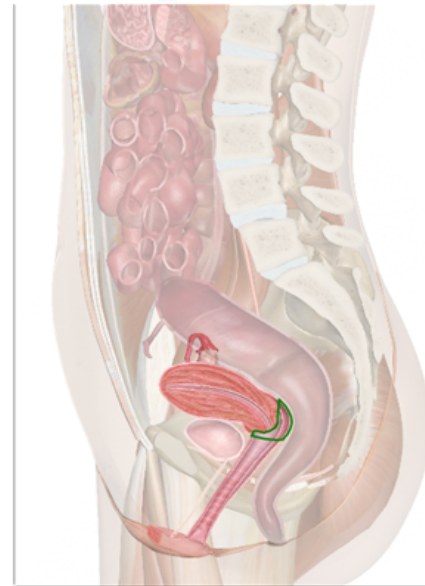
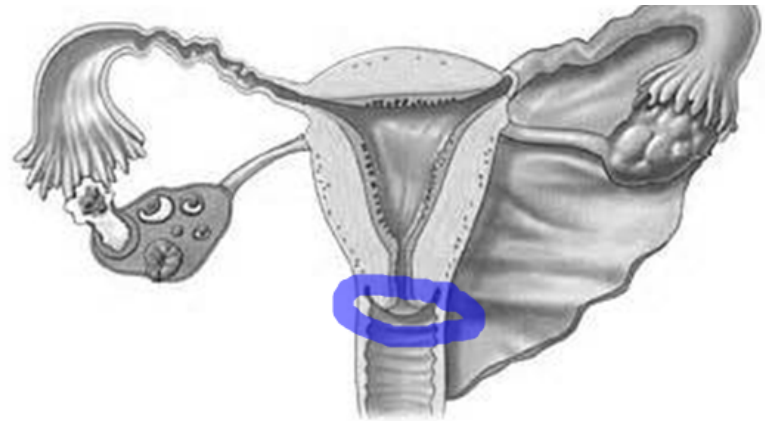
# Endometrium

- Lining of the uterus
- The lining is rich in blood and tissues that build when hormones tell it to
- If an egg is fertilized, the hormones will continue and this tissue will nourish a growing baby
- If an egg is not fertilized, the hormones are cut off and the tissue and unfertilized egg are shed as waste



# Cervix

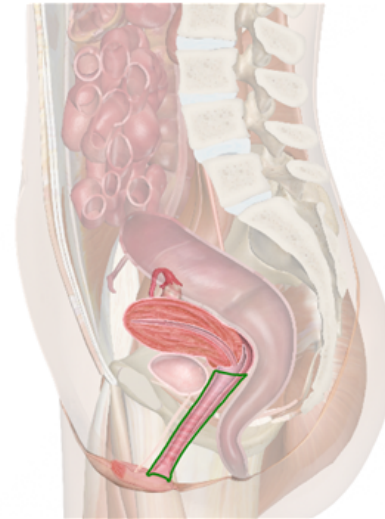
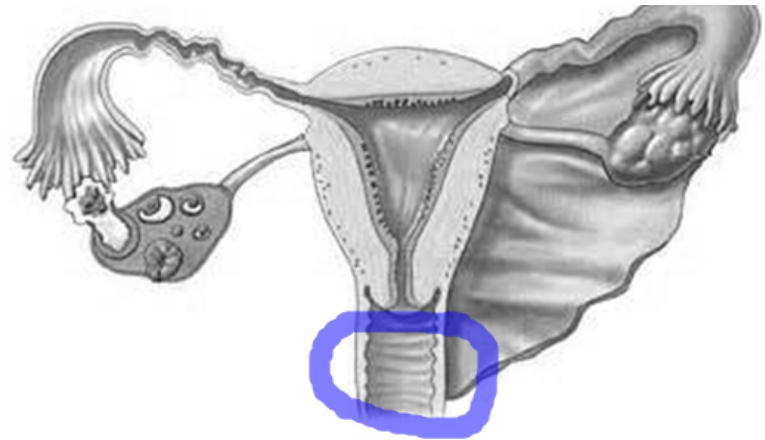
- The opening of the uterus
- Has a thick layer of mucus that thins when ovulating to allow sperm to go through
- Closes up tight when a fertilized egg is present in the uterus to protect a growing fetus
  - Dilates when ready to give birth
- This is of health concern because of cervical cancer (PAP Smear)





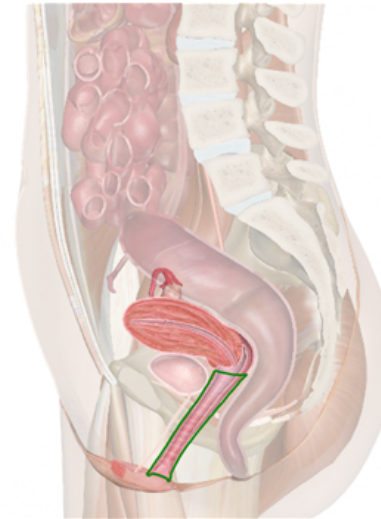
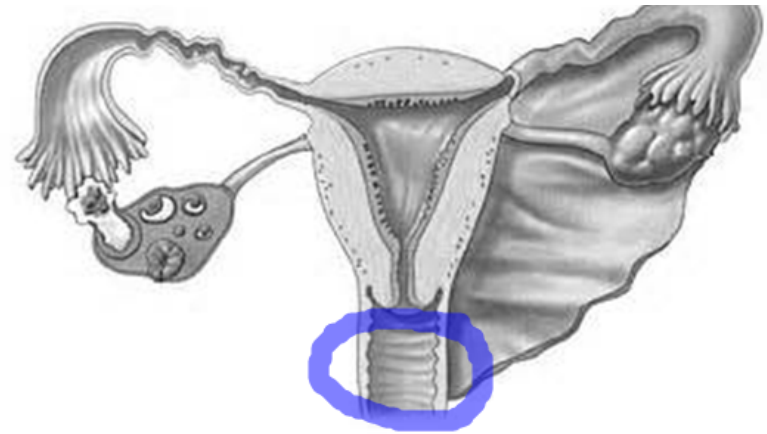
# Vagina

- Elastic muscular tube connecting the cervix to the outside of the body
- This is an INTERNAL reproductive part
  - Watery secretions produced by the vagina lubricate the vagina and have an acidic pH to prevent the growth of bacteria and yeast
  - The vagina makes the female reproductive system an OPEN sexual system



# Vagina Cont.

- During sexual intercourse, the vagina functions as the receptacle for the penis and carries sperm to the uterus and fallopian tubes. The elastic structure of the vagina allows it to stretch in both length and diameter to accommodate the penis
- During childbirth, the vagina acts as the birth canal to push the fetus from the uterus and out of the mother's body. Once again, the vagina's elasticity allows it to greatly increase its diameter to accommodate the baby
- Finally, the vagina provides a passageway for menstrual flow from the uterus to exit the body during menstruation.

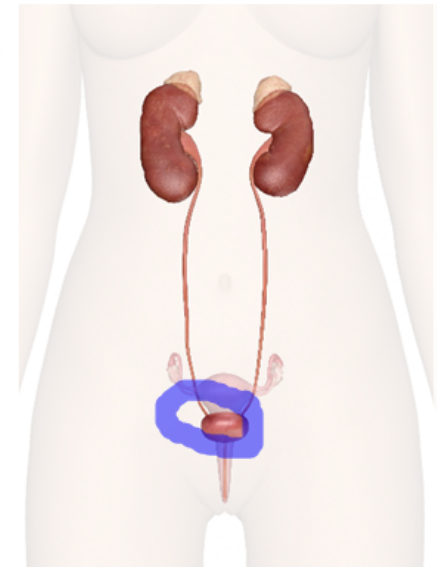
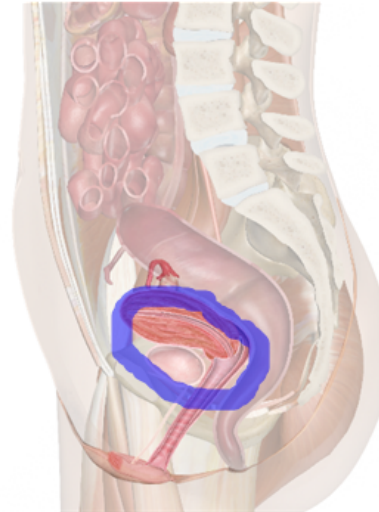


# Breasts

- Technically not part of the reproductive system but we talk about this in health because of its function and vulnerability to cancer cells (SBE)
  - Located in the front of the chest
  - Contains milk producing glands
    - Purpose is to nourish a baby
  - Size and shape differ per individual

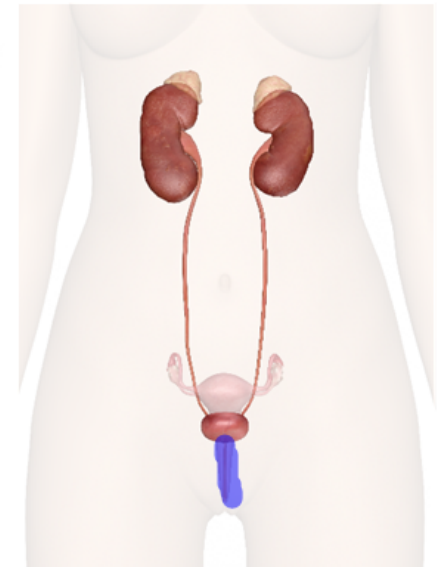
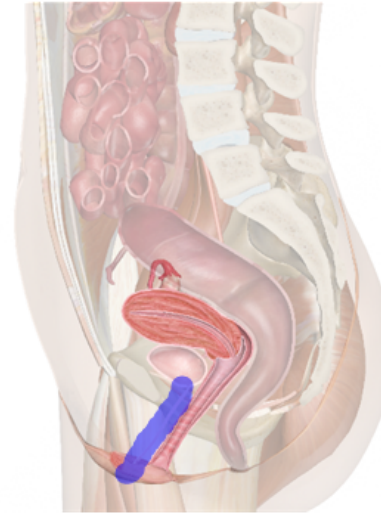
# Bladder

- Technically not part of the reproductive system but is part of the conversation in health class because of its location
- Because women have an open sexual system, the bladder is vulnerable to many of the infections that can also occur in the female reproductive system
- Stores urine (up to 2 liters)



# Urethra

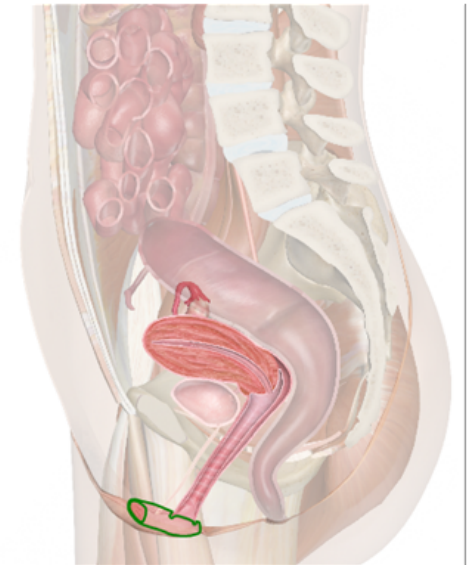
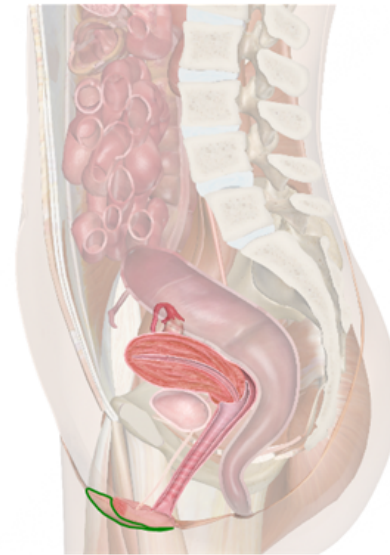
- Technically not part of the reproductive system but is part of the conversation in health class because of its location
- Because women have an open sexual system, the urethra is vulnerable to many of the infections that can also occur in the female reproductive system
- Passageway for urine to leave the body from the bladder



Now, lets talk about the external anatomy. These are parts that can be seen on the outside of the body. We call these parts of the female reproductive system as a whole 'Vulva'.

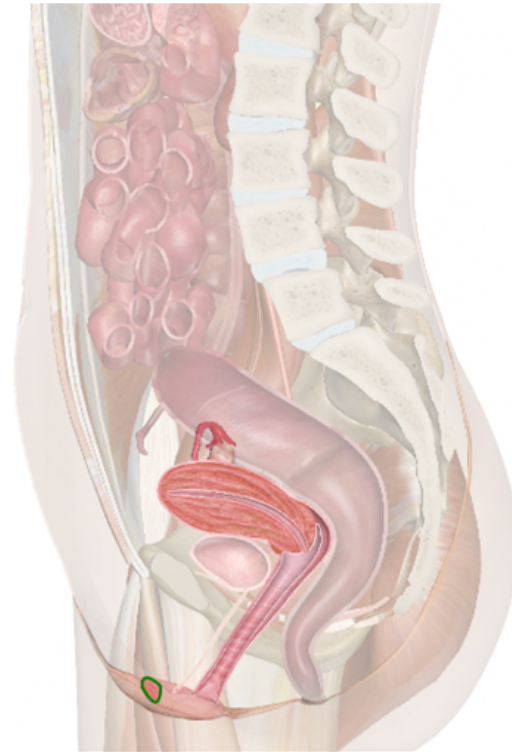
# Labia

- Two labia; labia majora (outermost and larger) and labia minora (innermost and smaller)
- These two flaps of skin enclose the vagina and the urethral opening to protect it from bacteria and debris



# Clitoris

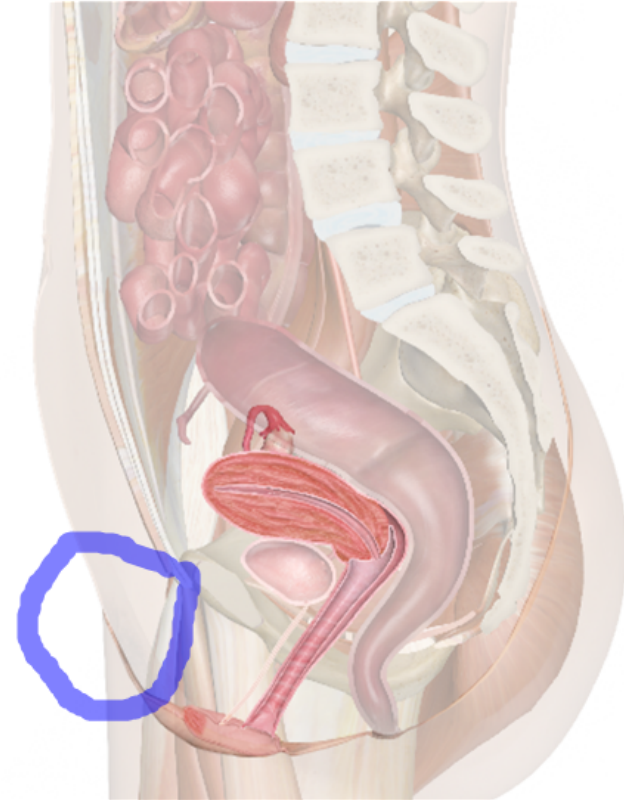
- Dense collection of nerves towards the front of the vulva
- Contains erectile tissue that when stimulated sends the message for the vaginal walls to release lubrication in preparation for a penis to enter the body





# Mons Pubis

- An area of a collection of fat
- Covered in pubic hair
- Meant for protection of the internal reproductive organs



Now, lets talk about the care and special concerns of the female reproductive system.

To keep the female reproductive system healthy, women should...

- Bathe regularly
- Practice abstinence / safer sex
- See a gynecologist for regular checkups
- Be honest with your doctor
- Be familiar with your body and note any pain in the abdominal area or pain with urination, changes in discharge (amount, color, smell), itching, changes in breast tissue etc.

- Perform self-examination of the breasts

- Breast cancer is the 2nd leading cancer causing death for women

- After a shower (as the breast tissue will be softened), place one hand behind the head bending an elbow, using the pads of your first three fingers, make a circular motion starting with the outside of the breast and making the way inward check for lumps, dimpling of the skin, abnormal coloration of the nipple and / or swelling