

# Patient Information

# Lichen Sclerosus (LS)

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# [www.plymouthhospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.plymouthhospitals.nhs.uk) Lichen Sclerosus (LS)

## Lichen Sclerosus (LS)

You have been told that you are suffering from Lichen Sclerosus. Lichen Sclerosus is a common itchy disease which affects genital and occasional non-genital skin. It may occur in adults and children. Your symptoms may have lasted for many years. Lichen Sclerosus may run in families and could rarely (0.1-3%) progress into vulval cancer. This is why clinical assessment +/- vulval skin biopsies is recommended in women with persistent vulval symptoms or lesions.

You may have noticed white or red areas on your vulva which may crack and be sore.

Your symptoms should improve with treatment which will consist of strong steroid creams/ointments which should control your symptoms. As time goes on and your Lichen Sclerosus improves you will need less frequent treatment.

In very few women with Lichen Sclerosus a vulval skin cancer may occur. It is therefore important that you should report any lumps or unusual changes in your symptoms immediately to your doctor. We advise patients with LS to have regular check-ups and you will be advised to either attend the clinic or your GP on a yearly basis.

Please read the section, general care of the vulva which gives advice on how to soothe and protect your vulval skin.

Address for further information:  
National Lichen Sclerosus Support Group  
2 Ivy House  
Wantage Road  
Great Shefford  
RG17 7DA  
Website:  
[www.hiway.co.uk/lichensclerosus](http://www.hiway.co.uk/lichensclerosus)

## **General care of the vulva**

Vulval skin is sensitive. It may react to irritants such as soaps, and a whole range of substances may cause allergy.

The sort of clothing you wear may have an effect on your vulval disease. The recommendations here are general for all types of vulval disease and should be used as well as the more specific treatment prescribed by the clinic doctor.

## **Clothing**

Always wear loose fitting underwear. Sometimes, if very uncomfortable, it is quite helpful to wear no knickers at all. Try to avoid tight outer garments such as bicycling shorts or tight leggings.

## **Washing**

Avoid all contact with soap. You may find it beneficial to start washing your hair separately to the rest of your body as shampoo can irritate. Aqueous cream BP used as a soap substitute is soothing for most vulval disorders. It can be used also as a local skin softener.

It is important that you avoid contact with non-prescribed over-the-counter preparations which might make your skin condition worse. Avoid perfume and personal deodorants.



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