

everyday feminism

WORK THROUGH ISSUES. STAND UP FOR YOURSELF. LIVE YOUR TRUTH.

I'm going to draw you a vulva. You may have called this a vagina in the past. Now you'll know that it is actually a vulva, and perhaps think of it more as the vagina's neighborhood.

Here's the Mons Veneris, or Pubis. This is the buttocks, and the asterisk represents an anus. The clitoris is closest to the top of the vulva. If this person were lying back-down, legs spread, it would be at the top. It is a highly sensitive organ, densely packed with nerve endings, with two roots running on either side of the vulva. The head of the clitoris, called the glans, is especially loaded, so I'm going to make it nice and bold. It's super sensitive! Skin, just like that on the intact penis, covers most of its shaft. It's designed to glide fluidly across the clitoris to stimulate arousal without harming the delicate glans.

Then, labia minora extend from this hood, downward. These are also known as the inner lips. They vary in color, shape, sizes, and symmetry. These ones are going to be wavy lips, with magenta, purple lining. A second layer of lips and protection for the vulva, are closer and more similar in color and texture to the inner thighs. These are called the labia majora.

The center of the vulva is called the vestibule. I learned about this area from a doctor in China whose English translation was "porch." Aw!

The meatus or urethra opening is about here, a little higher or lower depending on the body. The vaginal introitus is the opening to the vagina just below that and definitely changes in appearance as you develop. This one has folds and turns and character.

Even further down is the perineum. This is the space between the genitals and the anus. You may have heard it called the "taint," or the "gooch."

Have you heard about Aphrodite, the goddess of love, beauty and sexuality? Her Roman equivalent is Venus. This mound of bumper padding is named after her: Mons Veneris, like Mountain of Venus. During puberty, hair begins to grow here, on the outer lips, the perineum, the anus. Sometimes it's shaved, or waxed, or groomed: to each their own hairstyle.

Alright, I want to show you a little bit about the vulva, using my body. This shirt will come up over my head, representing a clitoris. Now we'll take a second one and cover me up this way. This shirt: different sized labia, inner labia, labia minora. Now we'll use the big puffy as a labia majora, or the outer lips. Notice these can stick out, or be small, inside, and completely closed.

What I want for us to understand is the clitoris here and how this part actually trumps it in terms of importance because here my head is very, very sensitive. Something equivalent to my head being touched directly, or the clitoris being touched directly, would be a leg coming in (if it were a finger, fingering the clitoris), and that's going to be really painful!

I don't want to get whacked in the face. So I'm telling you all out there about something very important called the clitoral hood, or prepuce. And the way that this works is that I can stimulate the clitoris without touching it directly. Mm, feels so good. So you can take, instead of one leg kicking my face, you can take two, you put them on either side of the clitoris here on the hood, and you move them back and forth like this and it will feel much better for the body.

Between the clitoris and the prepuce, there is a fluid called sebum, which is released by the body, and that can turn into smegma if it is left too long. Smegma is kind of like this cheesy buildup between the two. I'm going to use toilet paper as an example here. If it's left there, it may adhere the prepuce to the glans, and this adhesion, called phimosis, can be very painful. It causes the area to feel inflamed, so either super arousing, wanna-have-sex-all-the-time, or really irritable and get-away-from-me. This is not positive.

And this adhesion can happen anywhere from one hundred percent, to seventy-five, fifty, twenty-five, but when it does, the prepuce doesn't fluidly move over the clitoris, and the buildup can cause sex and masturbation, even washing yourself to be really painful. So make sure to use the prepuce to touch the clitoris, and to clean out the smegma.