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# VULVODYNIA

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## definition

A chronic pain condition describing unexplained pain in the vulva ('dynia' is the suffix meaning pain). Pain confined to the vestibule is called vestibulodynia.

## symptoms

Characterized by pain in or around the vulva, patients often describe the sensation as burning or sharp pain. Intercourse is often painful, and other common symptoms include low back pain, urinary urgency/frequency, and GI symptoms like bloating.

## diagnosis

The condition is a diagnosis of exclusion made in the absence of infection or other identifiable cause, after the pain has lasted at least three months. For some pain only occurs with contact (provoked), while for others it is more constant (unprovoked).

## PT

Often the pelvic floor is the underlying cause of symptoms, with overly tight muscles irritating nerves and causing pain to refer to the vulvar region. Physical therapy restores normal function to the muscles and all other areas that can irritate pelvic nerves.



*pelvic floor physical therapy is the most proven treatment for Vulvodynia*

The most proven treatment for vulvodynia, pelvic floor physical therapy has been shown to significantly lower both pelvic pain and pain with intercourse. Clinical trials have shown pelvic PT is nearly twice as effective as lidocaine, and women reported their satisfaction with physical therapy as a 9 out of 10.

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## multi-disciplinary approach

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PATIENTS ALWAYS BENEFIT FROM A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH IN ADDITION TO PHYSICAL THERAPY. THIS CAN INCLUDE ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:

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A topical Lidocaine cream can reduce temporarily reduce symptoms while you're improving or during flares. or before intercourse. Topical hormone creams can also be used to improve vaginal health.

### TOPICAL MEDICATIONS

Lowering stress levels with gentle exercise, meditation, yoga, deep breathing, or working with a psychologist can reverse nervous system upregulation.

### STRESS RELIEF

Acupuncture has been shown to reduce pelvic pain symptoms for some patients, and many patients report benefits with supplements to reduce inflammation and promote healing.

### ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS

Managing hormone levels can result in symptom improvement, especially if pain increases at certain points in the monthly cycle.

### HORMONE THERAPY

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## additional resources

[www.PelvicSanity.com/Vulvodynia](http://www.PelvicSanity.com/Vulvodynia)

Finding Pelvic Sanity Online Support Group ([www.Facebook.com/groups/FindingPelvicSanity](http://www.Facebook.com/groups/FindingPelvicSanity))

National Vulvodynia Association ([www.nva.org](http://www.nva.org))

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