

Sexually Transmitted Infections

LET'S TALK
Helping young people thrive



Who are Let's Talk?

We support young people to develop **knowledge, skills and confidence** to make **informed decisions** about their **health and wellbeing**

Free, confidential, and non-judgemental support and advice including about:

- Relationships
- Sexual Health
- Drugs and alcohol
- Understanding anger
- Health and wellbeing





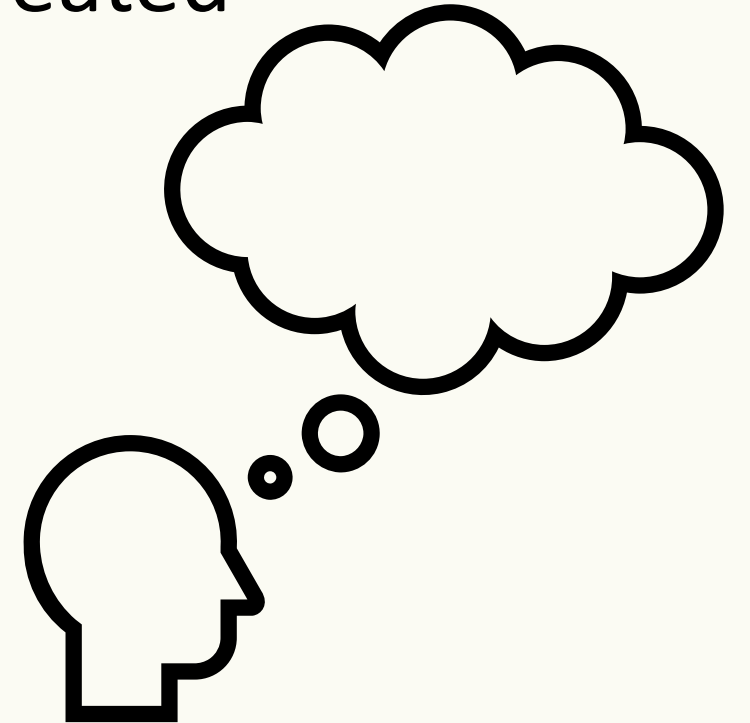
Group Agreement

- Safe space for learning – no judgement
- Take part
- Ask questions – but nothing personal
- Listen – don't talk over
- Language
- Confidentiality
- Look after you!

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Recognise what sex can mean to different people, and the importance of safer sex in all types of sexual activity
- Understand what STIs are and how they can be passed on
- Identify common symptoms, and when and how to get tested and treated
- Demonstrate using a condom correctly on a demonstrator
- Practice responses for setting boundaries around condom use
- Identify where to go for free STI testing and treatment and support around sexual health



Name the bits

Can you name the different parts of the
genitals?

Teaching notes

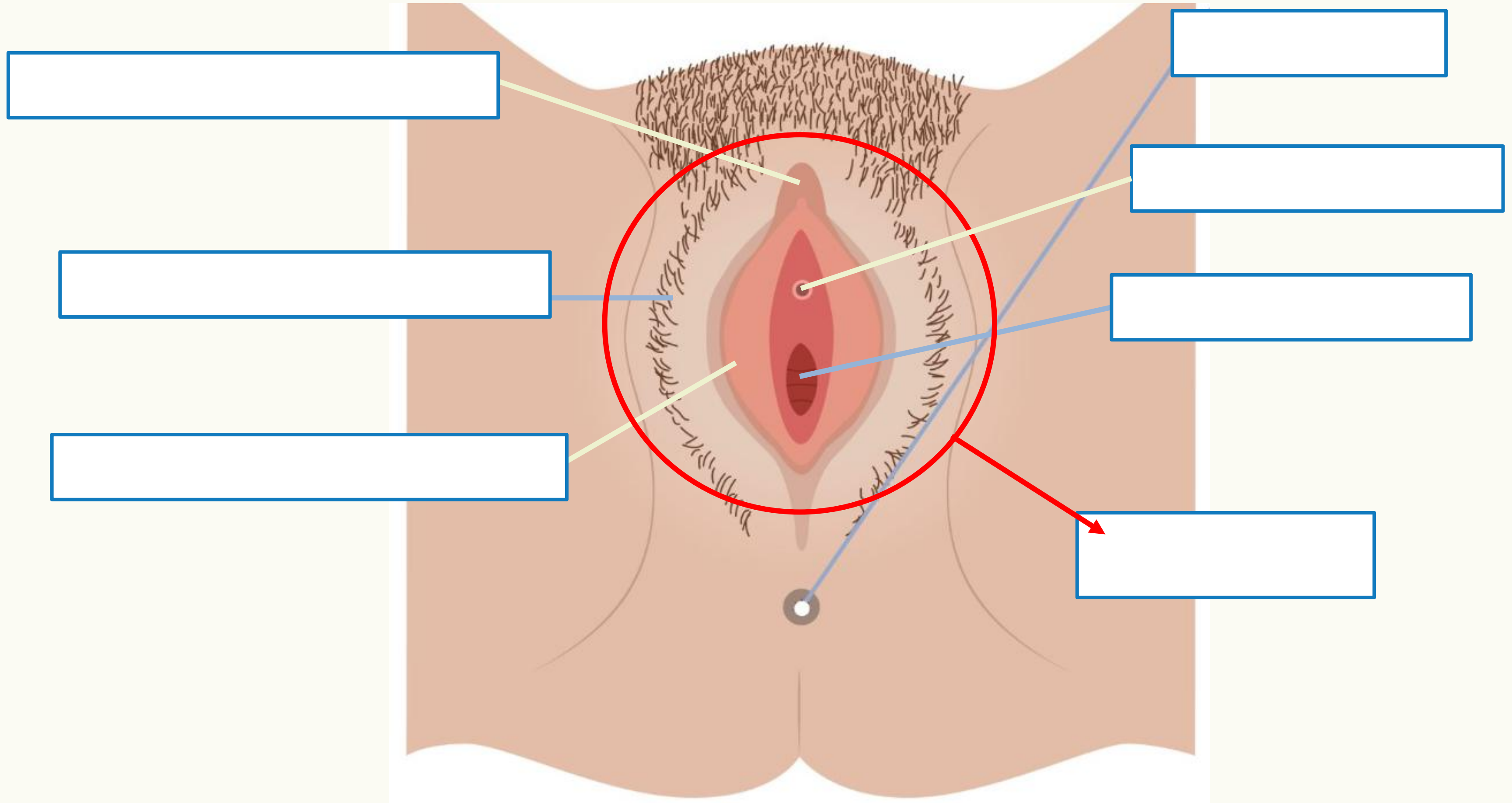
Name the bits activity can be useful if learners have not learnt about external anatomy yet. This provides an important foundation to understanding their bodies and how to talk to healthcare professionals and trusted adults about concerns.

Print out unlabelled diagrams and ask learners to label these in groups. You can choose whether to provide the labels at the bottom or have them label without prompt.

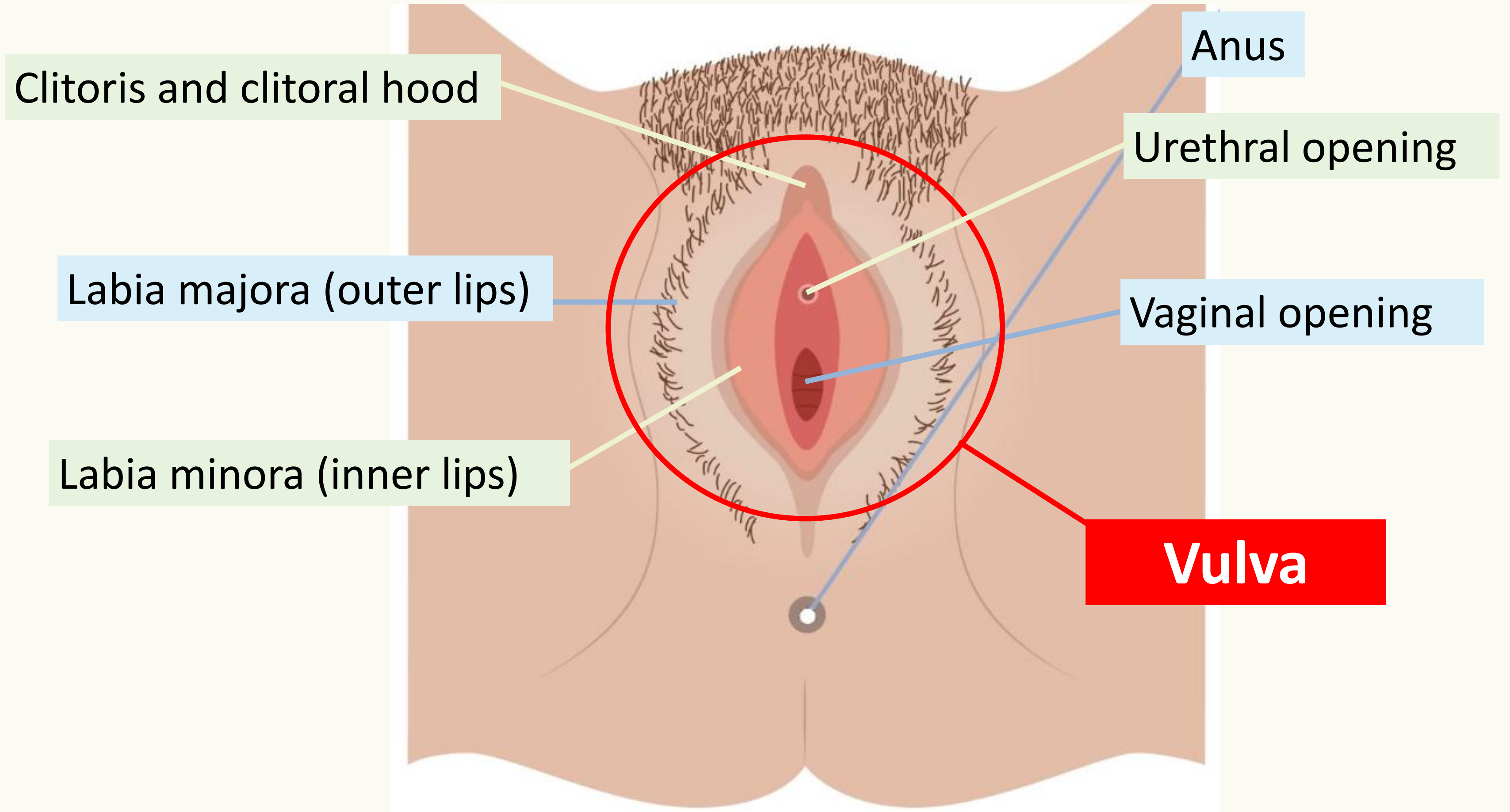
Explanation of anatomy can be found on the Let's Talk website Puberty page:

<https://www.wchc.nhs.uk/services/lets-talk/young-people/relationships-and-sex-education-rse/puberty/>

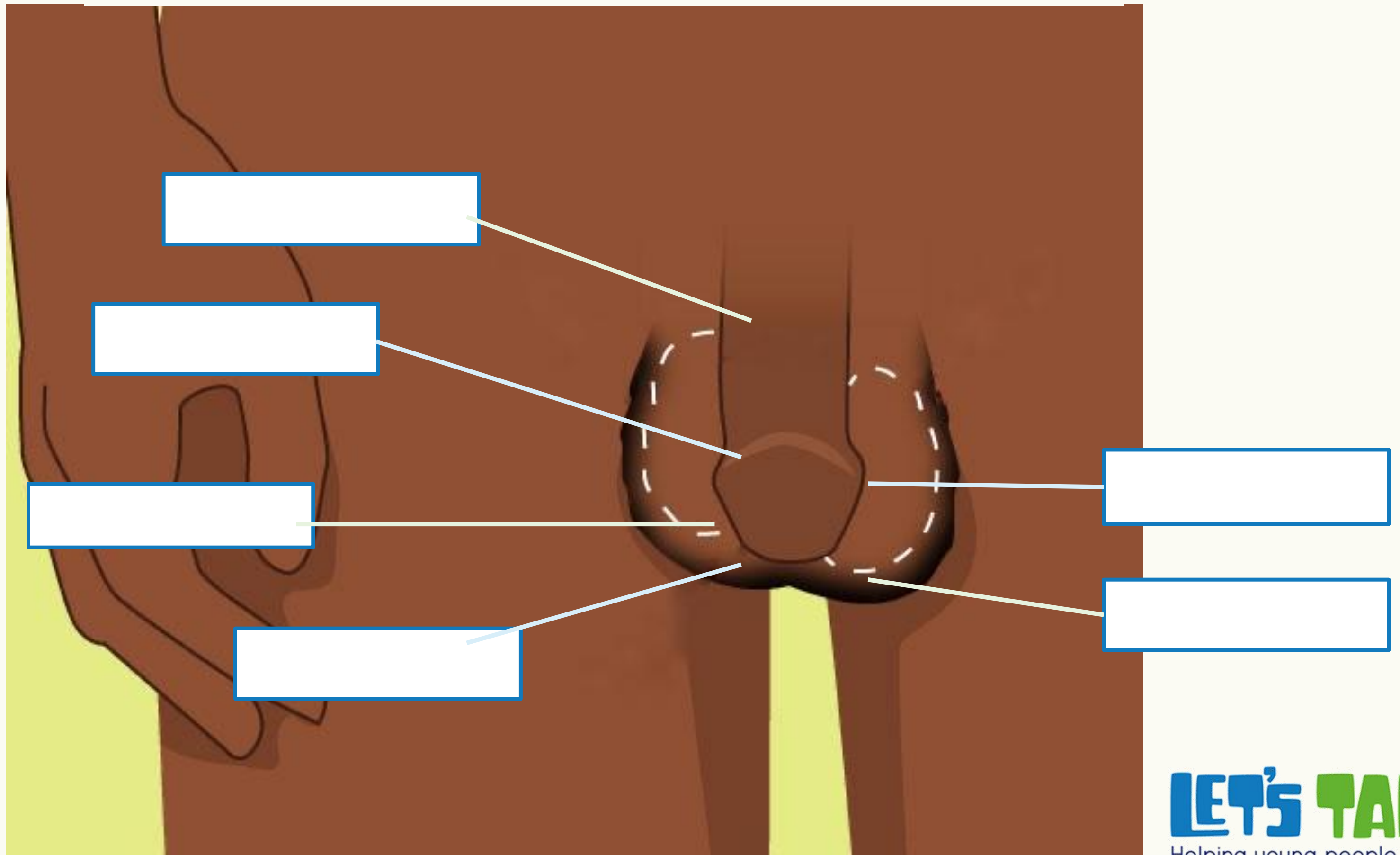
Anatomy of the Vulva



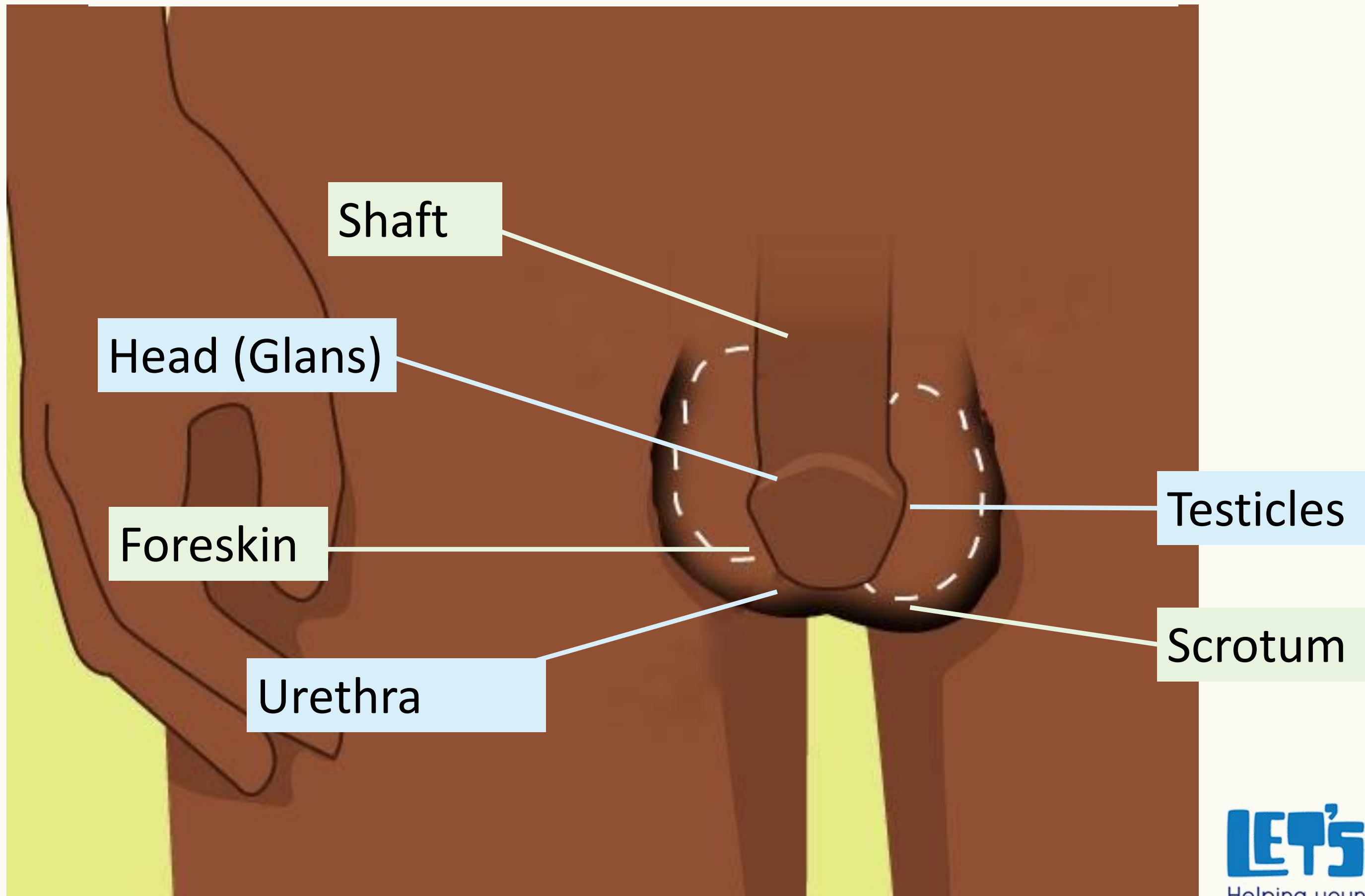
Anatomy of the Vulva



Anatomy of the Penis



Anatomy of the Penis



Keeping clean

Your genitals are sensitive, so they need gentle care to avoid irritation or infection.

It's best to wash using just your hands and avoid using cloths, sponges or loofahs which can cause irritation.



Keeping clean

If you have a **vulva and vagina**, use warm water to clean the outside, making sure to get into the folds of the **labia** and **clitoral hood**.

Make sure that you don't wash inside the vagina as it cleans itself and washing inside can cause infections.

If you have a **penis and testicles**, use warm water and mild, unscented soap to clean the whole area, pulling your **foreskin** back to clean underneath.



Teaching notes

Recap on consent.

Consider teaching this as a standalone topic before teaching sexual health – however it is important to teach consent messaging throughout all RSE topics and make learners aware of how it is relevant to different situations.

See the Let's Talk website Consent page for more on this topic:

<https://www.wchc.nhs.uk/services/lets-talk/young-people/relationships-and-sex-education-rse/consent/>

Consent

In intimate situations, it is important to make sure that you and your partner:

- know you **have a choice** to take part or not
- **understand what's happening**
- feel you can **make that choice freely**, and are not pressured or threatened in any way

What is the age of consent in the UK?



What is sex?

Most people learn about the type of sex that can lead to pregnancy, where a penis enters a vagina.

This is called vaginal sex.

What else can sex mean to people?



Teaching notes

Types of sex:

Ask why is it important to know about the different types of sex?

- Diversity in relationships and bodies
- STIs – ask which of these types of sex can you get an STI from? Answer: All of them! The only one you can't get an STI from is masturbation.

Remind them – this is not a checklist – some people will do all of these, some will do some and some will never have any type of sex ever and that's ok!



Vaginal sex

penetration of a vagina with a penis (this type of sex can lead to pregnancy)

Oral sex

using a mouth on their partner's vulva or penis to give sexual pleasure

Anal sex

penetration of a person's anus with a penis or sex toy

Sex toys

using items created specifically for sexual activity

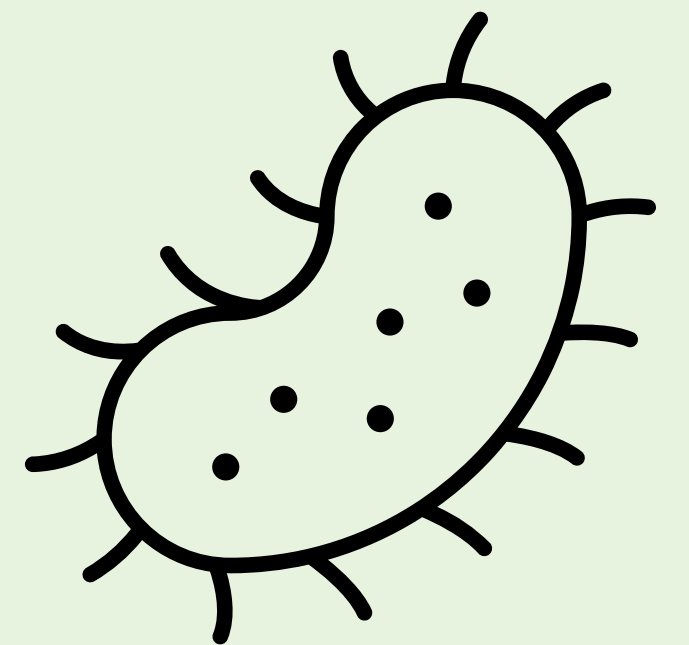
Masturbation/sexual touching

using hands and fingers to give sexual pleasure to yourself or others

Genital to genital contact

rubbing or touching vulva or penis against their partner's

Sexually Transmitted Infections



Teaching notes

Why we say STI, not STD:

infection is defined as the invasion of the body by bacteria, viruses or parasites. While an infection can cause symptoms and complications, altering the normal function of the body, it does not depend upon this by definition. A disease, by contrast, causes specific health complications.

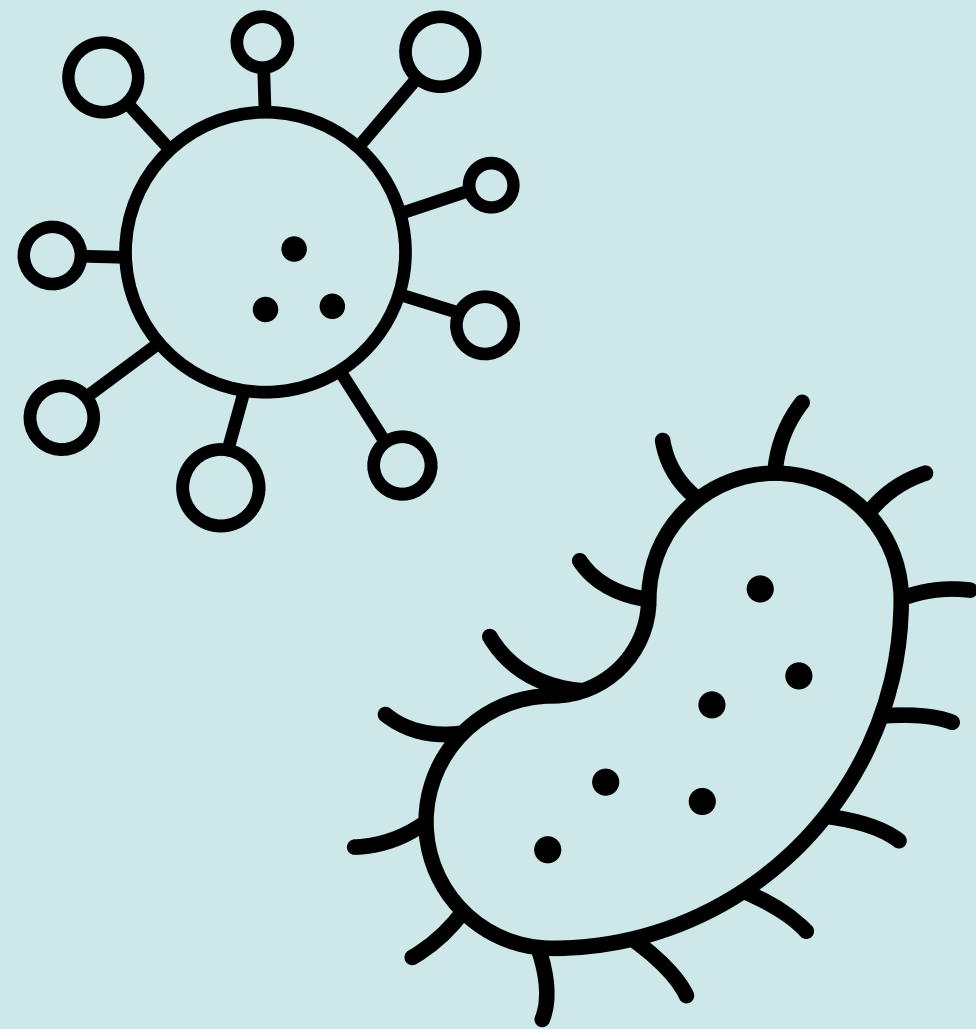
Simply put, a sexually transmitted infection is the broader term – and an STI on its own is not necessarily something that will develop into a disease. You may carry the infection, and even be contagious, but it may never lead to any symptoms or cause you real health problems.

Infection: Refers to the presence of pathogens in the body.

Disease: Refers to the symptoms and complications that result from the infection.

The term 'disease' also often carries more stigma to it, so the use of the word 'infection' can help to lessen this stigma leading to more people getting tested and treated.

STIs



STI stands for **sexually transmitted infection**.

STIs are **infections** that can be passed from person to person through **unprotected sexual contact**.

Why do we say STI and not STD?

Teaching notes

For more information about STIs visit the Sexual Health Wirral website:

<https://www.sexualhealthwirral.nhs.uk/stis/>

Genital Herpes

Chlamydia

HIV

Gonorrhoea

Can you name an STI?

Hepatitis B

Genital Warts

Pubic Lice

Trichomoniasis

Syphilis

**Myth Busting:
True or False?**

STIs are rare.

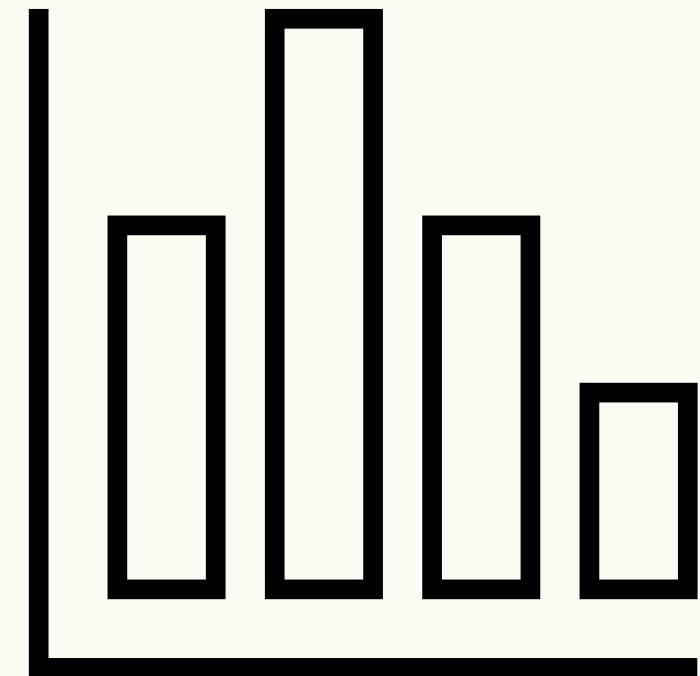
False

STIs are very common, especially in people under 25.

Statistics

In the **North West**, half of all new **STI** diagnoses in 2022 were in people aged 15-24 years.

On the Wirral, approximately **60%** of new STI diagnoses were in **15-24** year-olds, higher than the national average.



If you don't have symptoms,
you're fine and you won't have
an STI.

False

Most STIs show no visible symptoms, and many people
don't know they're infected.

The only way to know is to get tested.

If left untreated, chlamydia can cause infertility.

True

Chlamydia is easy to test and treat, but if left untreated it can cause serious health conditions – even if you don't have noticeable symptoms.

Chlamydia

- It is the most common (STI) in under 25s.
- 75% of women and 50% of men do not have any symptoms.
- Chlamydia can infect the rectum through anal sex, throat through oral sex and if genital fluids come into contact with eyes, it can cause conjunctivitis.
- You **cannot** get chlamydia from kissing/hugging/sharing towels, sitting on the same toilet seat or sharing cups/plates/cutlery.

When on effective treatment with very low levels of HIV in your blood, you cannot pass on HIV to someone else.

True

When someone has been taking HIV treatment for at least 6 months and has a viral load (the level of HIV in their blood) that is so low it can't be detected by medical tests, they cannot pass on the virus and HIV is not able to damage their immune system.

If someone's genitals have a strong fishy odour it means they are unclean

False

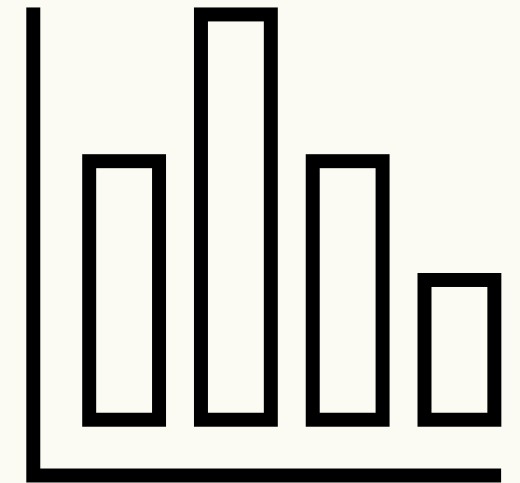
Bacterial vaginosis (BV), an infection which is NOT an STI, can cause a strong fishy odour, and someone is actually more likely to develop BV if they over-wash by using scented soaps, cleaning inside the vagina, or using vaginal deodorant.

The HPV vaccine only helps to
reduce the risk of cervical
cancer

False

Statistics

In the **North West**, the genital warts diagnoses among females aged **15-19** had a 93% decrease between 2018-2022 thanks to **HPV** vaccination.



If you have an STI it means
you're dirty and you sleep
around

False

STIs are not dirty

All infections are **treatable** and most are **curable**.

Using the terms '**clean**' or '**dirty**' to describe someone's sexual health is **unhelpful** and **untrue**.

You wouldn't use the word dirty if somebody had the cold or the flu.

How do people get STIs?

Unprotected vaginal, oral or anal sex

Genital to genital contact – even if there is no penetration, orgasm or ejaculation

Sharing sex toys that haven't been washed or covered with a new condom each time they're used

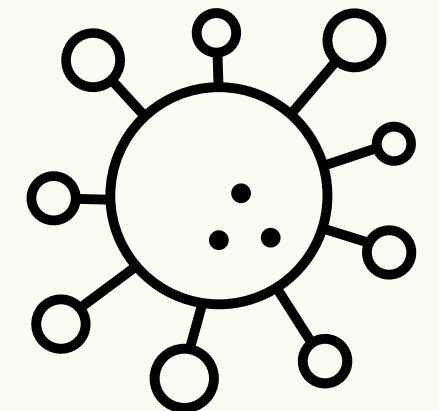
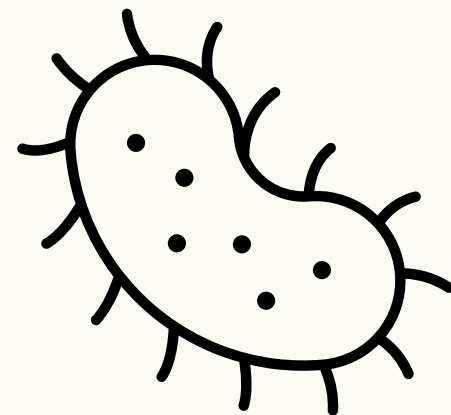
Signs and symptoms

Stinging, tingling, itching or burning

Black powder or little eggs in pubic hair or underwear

Needing to **wee** all the time

Soreness or swelling



Signs and symptoms

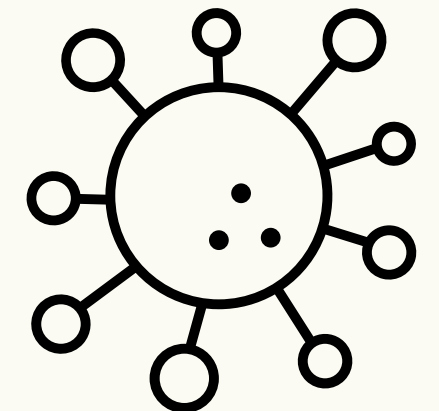
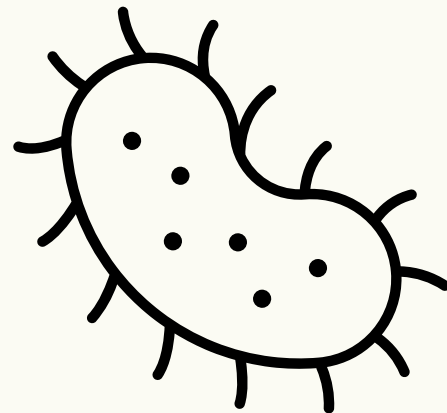
Unusual discharge –
smells different, different colour or texture

Pain whilst urinating

Unusual bleeding

Blisters or spots

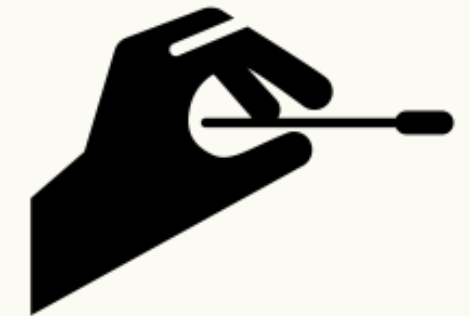
Anything that doesn't feel right for **you**



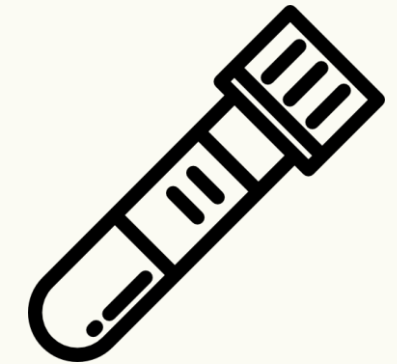
STI testing

There are different types of tests depending on the infection. Most of these tests you can do yourself at home or at the clinic.

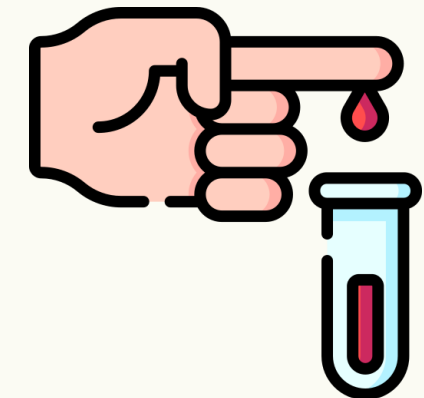
Anal, vaginal, and throat swabs - A small cotton-bud swab that you insert and rub inside the area for a few seconds.



Urine sample – you may get asked to wee into a little pot, and the nurse will check if there is an infection in the urine.



Blood sample – this can either be a finger prick, or a normal blood test taken by a nurse.



Treatment

Most STIs are treated easily with antibiotic tablets, creams or injections, and a doctor or nurse will be able to confirm the right treatment for you.

Some STIs like HIV, herpes and genital warts cannot be cured, but there is treatment available to manage symptoms, reduce the likelihood of passing them on, and reduce the chance of long-term problems.



Treatment

Sexually transmitted infections will not just go away on their own, so it's really important to get them tested and treated as soon as possible.

Without treatment, STIs can lead to serious and life-threatening complications including:

- Infertility
- Pelvic inflammatory disease
- Increased risk of cancer



PrEP

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PREP)

- PrEP is used by someone without HIV to **prevent** contracting the virus by taking the pill on an ongoing basis.
- In the UK PrEP is available through NHS sexual health clinics for “high risk” individuals.

PEP

Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)

PEP is a way to use HIV meds AFTER sex to try to prevent HIV infection.

- Must be taken within 72 hours after exposure to HIV (the sooner the better)
- Is available at some sexual health clinics and hospital A&E departments
- Does not always work – for emergencies only
- PEP is **NOT** a contraceptive, and it does **NOT** prevent other infections.

When things don't feel right



Not an STI but have similar symptoms:

Bacterial Vaginosis (BV)

is not a STI, but can develop more often with sexual activity. BV does not occur in people with a penis.

Thrush

is not an STI, but it can be passed on during sex. **Anyone can get thrush** but it's more common in people with a vulva.

Urinary tract infection (UTI)

is an infection in any part of the urinary system. Most infections involve the bladder and the urethra.

Condoms



Condoms

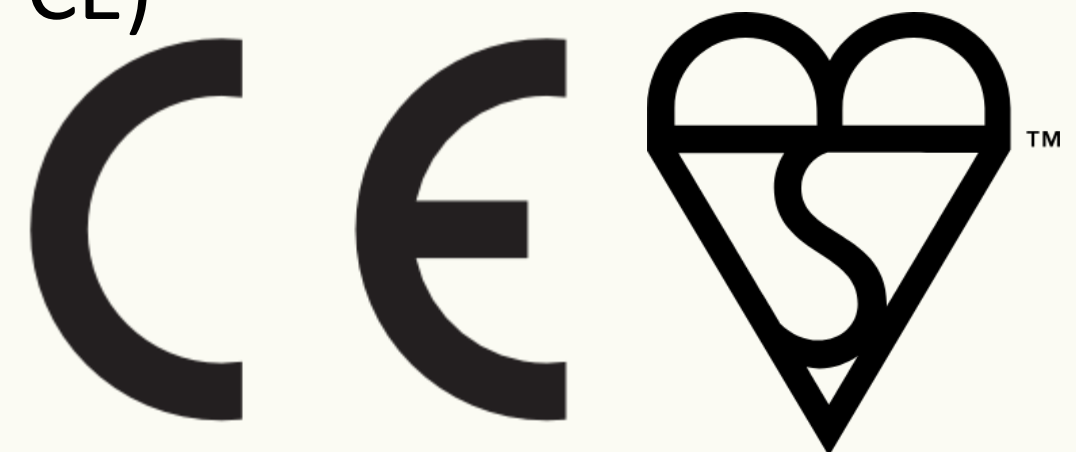
Condoms (internal and external) are the **only** form of contraception that protect against both STIs and pregnancy.

What three things need to be checked before using a condom?

The date (e.g. 07/2028)

Damage

The quality mark (kite or CE)



Condoms

There are loads of different types of condoms that you can get completely **free** and **confidentially** from a sexual health clinic like ourPlace.

Different sizes – smaller or larger

Latex free – for those with latex allergies

Textured – for pleasure

Flavoured – for oral sex only

Thinner or thicker – for different sensations



Let's practice!

Teaching notes

Use a condom demonstrator and condom if possible. Explain the different types of condoms: regular, latex free, different sizes, different flavours, different textures and thicknesses.

Explain that condoms should be used when using sex toys that are being shared as well as on a penis.

You can also use this video to explain and visualise:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vww9rk1USss>

How to safely use a condom

1

Feel for the condom in the packet, push it to the side and slowly rip the packet. Do not use teeth!

2

Make sure the condom is the right way up (make a little hat!)
Pinch the tip of the condom, and place on the head of the penis or sex toy.

3

Still pinching the tip, roll the condom down to the base of the penis or sex toy, and get rid of any air bubbles. You can add lube to the condom now.



How to safely remove a condom



1

Hold the condom at the base and check for any rips.

2

If no damage, slowly remove the condom and tie a knot so it doesn't leak.

If you have sex again, use a new condom.

3

Place the condom in a tissue and put it in the bin (not the toilet!)

Teaching notes

Condom excuses:

Ask the learners how they could respond to each of these excuses – remind them they don't have to explain themselves and can just say no but it's useful to have other responses.

It doesn't feel as good – it doesn't feel good if you are worrying about getting pregnancy or STIs

We don't need one, I'll pull out – hard to time and pre-cum exists. Orgasms and ejaculation are two different systems and may be a delay.

I'm too big for a condom – stretch out condom to show how big it stretches, also remember you can get larger and smaller condoms for free from sexual health clinics like ourPlace

I'm allergic to latex – latex free condoms exist

We don't need a condom if we're using sex toys – remember, you can get STIs if sex toys are shared

I thought you were on the pill – the pill doesn't protect against STIs and doesn't work for everybody

Condom Excuses

'It doesn't feel as good'

'I'm allergic to latex'

'We don't need one, I'll pull out'

'We don't need a condom if we're using sex toys'

'I'm too big for a condom'

'I thought you were on the pill?'

Sexual health is **just as important** as any other part of physical health.

Like the dentist for your teeth or a therapist for your mental health, the Sexual Health teams are here to keep you well!

You can get contraception, tests and advice at your nearest sexual health clinic or GP.

It can be **empowering** to ask for help.

**Worried
about visiting
a clinic or
your GP?**

**They've seen
it all before!**

Where to get support

Let's Talk Wirral:

www.wchc.nhs.uk/services/lets-talk

Sexual Health Wirral:

www.sexualhealthwirral.nhs.uk

Brook:

www.brook.org.uk

Our Place Sexual Health Clinic

St Catherine's Health Centre

ourPlace

ourPlace is a free, confidential and non-judgemental service for young people aged 19 and under living in Wirral.

Our friendly team provide advice, support and treatment in a discreet and young person friendly clinic area.

Services and support:

- Contraception
- Emergency contraception
- Condoms
- STI testing
- Psychosexual support
- LGBTQ+ support





Visiting ourPlace

Monday to Thursday - 3.00pm to 7.00pm

Friday - 3.00pm to 6.00pm

Saturday - 1.30pm to 3.30pm

For appointments, please call:
0300 123 5474

Location:

ourPlace, 1st floor, St Catherine's Health Centre,
Derby Road, Birkenhead CH42 0LQ