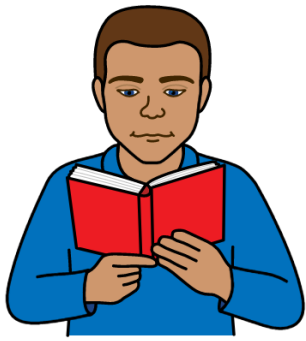


# Information about a type of cancer called vaginal cancer

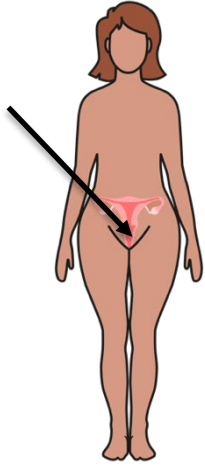
This information is for women and people with a vagina





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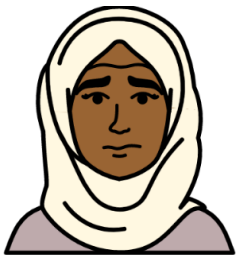


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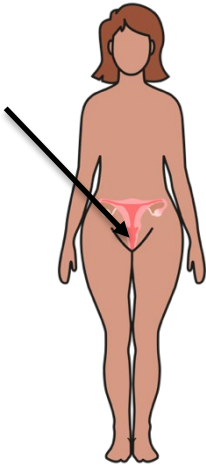
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**How to get more information**

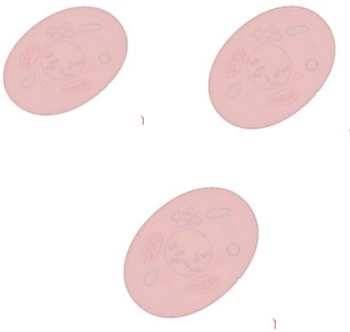
**14**

# What is vaginal cancer?



Vaginal cancer is a cancer that starts in your **vagina**.

Your vagina is down inside your body between your legs.



Your vagina is made up of lots of small things called **cells**.

Vaginal cancer can happen if the cells in your vagina start to change and grow in the wrong way.



Women and people with a vagina can get vaginal cancer at any age.

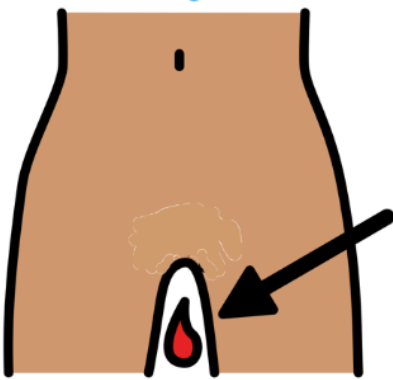
But most people who get it are over 75 years old.

# What are the signs of vaginal cancer?

Some people have no signs at first.

But some of the main signs are below:

## 1. Bleeding from your vagina when you do not think you should be.



For example, bleeding from your vagina after sex.

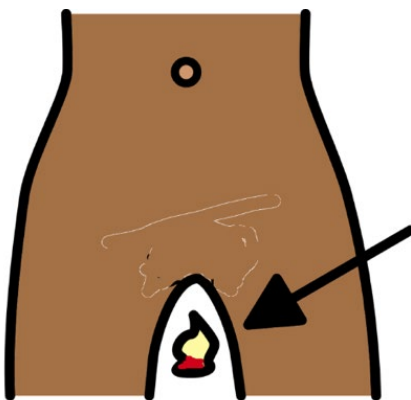
Or bleeding from your vagina between periods if you have periods.

Or bleeding after the **menopause** has happened. This is when women stop having periods for good.

## 2. Changes to the stuff that comes out of your vagina.

For example, there might be blood.  
Or it might smell bad.

The stuff that comes out of your vagina is called **discharge**. It is usually white or clear.





Some other signs of vaginal cancer are:

**3. Pain when you have sex.**

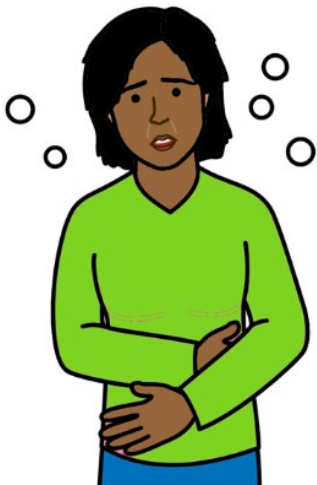
**4. A lump in your vagina.**



**5. An itch in your vagina that won't go away.**



**6. Pain when you go for a wee.**



**7. Pain in your vagina or near your vagina all the time.**

## How does vaginal cancer start?

Most vaginal cancer starts because of some viruses that people can get in their skin.

The viruses are called **human papillomavirus**. Or **HPV** for short.

A virus is like an illness that you can catch from other people.

People can get **HPV** from having sex or touching people in a sexual way.

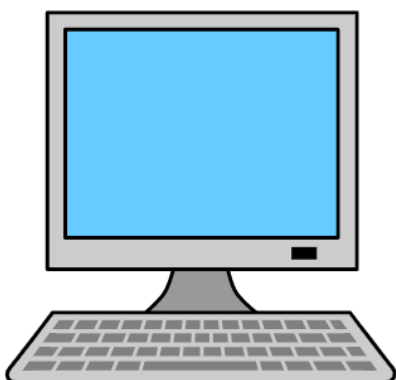
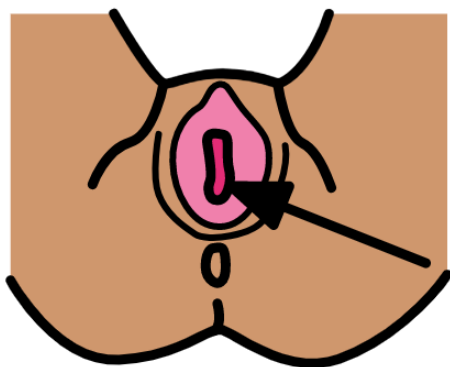
HPV is not usually a problem. It usually goes away on its own.

But some types of HPV can cause vaginal cancer over time.

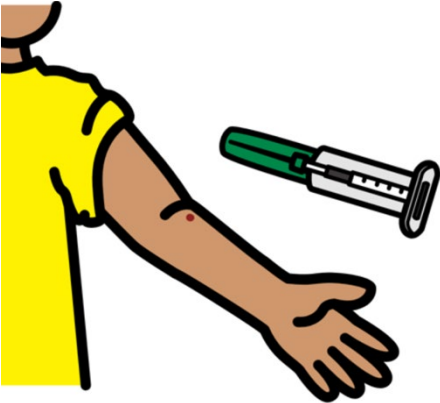
This does not happen often. But it is still best to check if you are worried.

There is more information about HPV on our website:

<https://eveappeal.org.uk/HPV-guide>



# Ways to help to stop vaginal cancer



Young people aged 12 to 13 can get a **vaccine**.

The vaccine can help to stop some people getting vaginal cancer.

The vaccine is called an **HPV vaccine**.

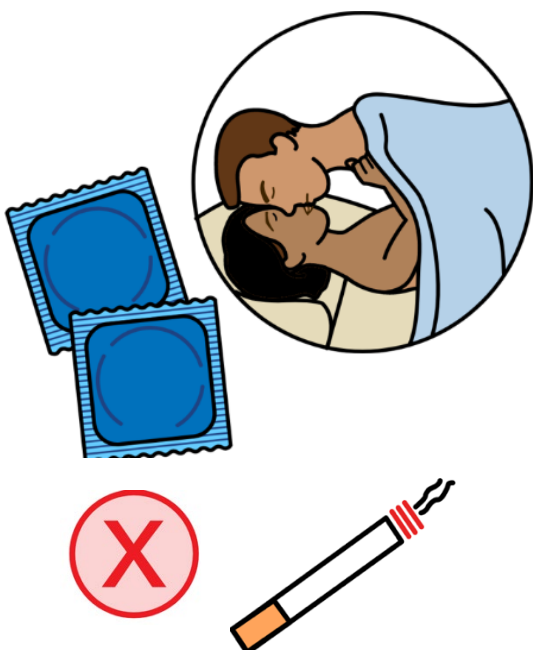


A vaccine can help to stop some illnesses.

You get a vaccine from a doctor or nurse.

Some people can get the vaccine for free.

Ask your doctor if you are not sure.



It might also help to use condoms if you do sexual things with someone else.

And it can help to stop smoking if you do smoke.

## What to do if you are worried

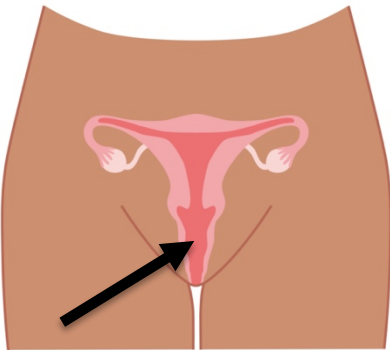


It is important to check with your doctor if you have any signs of vaginal cancer.

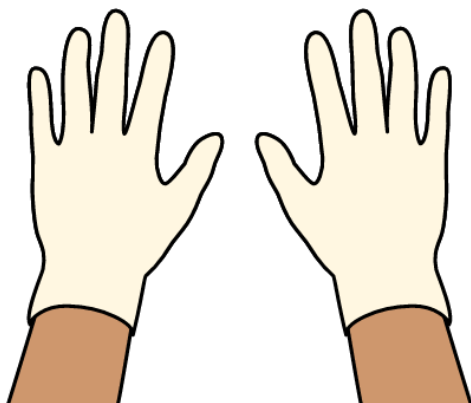
It is probably not vaginal cancer.

But it is best to check.

## What might happen if you go to the doctor



Your doctor might check the inside of your vagina.



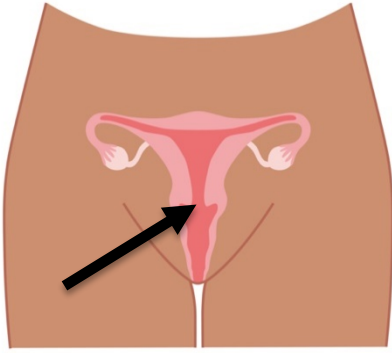
They might use their fingers to feel a bit inside your vagina.

That is to see if they can feel anything wrong.

The doctor will wear gloves to do that.

You can have a nurse or someone you know with you if you want.



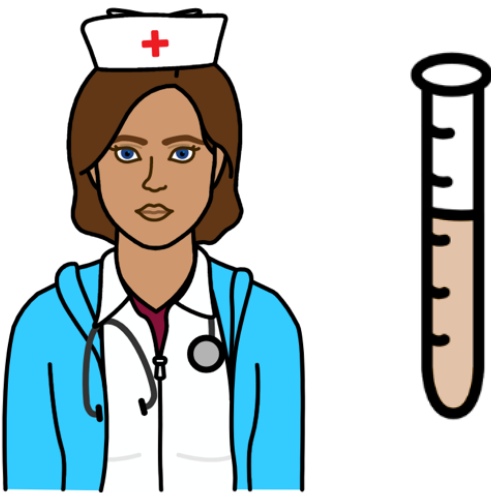


The doctor might also look at your **cervix** when they look inside your vagina.

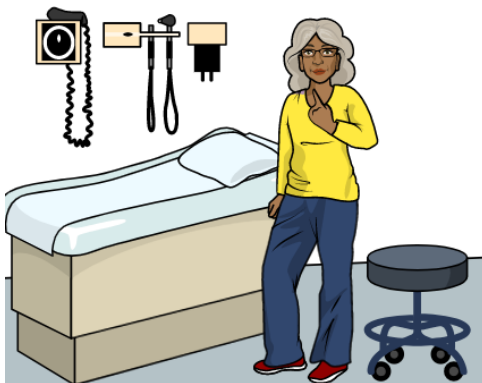
Your cervix is at the top of your vagina.

Your doctor will try to make these checks as gentle as possible for you.

You can ask them to stop if you want to.

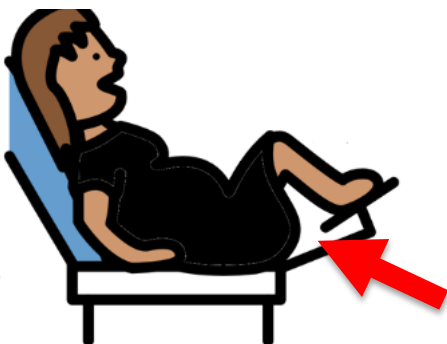


Your doctor may do a test to see if you have something else that is not cancer. Like an infection.



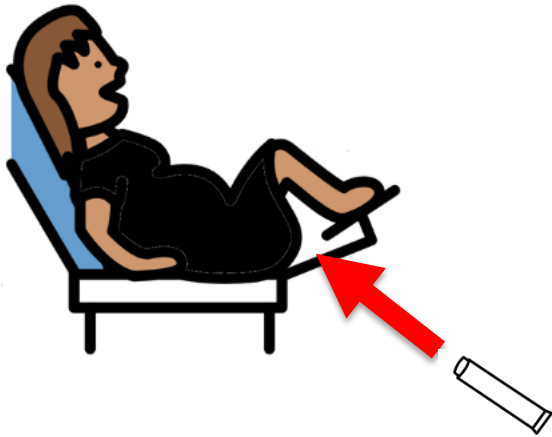
### **If there could be a problem in your vagina**

Your doctor will send you to another doctor or nurse in hospital to do more checks.



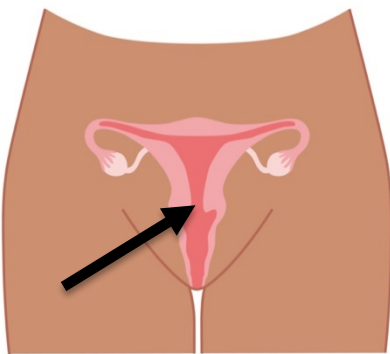
The new doctor or nurse might look inside your vagina.

They will look for lumps or anything that should not be there.



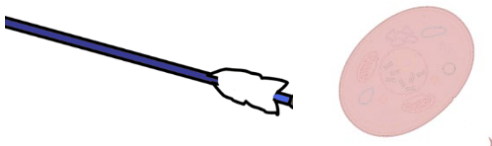
The new doctor or nurse might do another test.

They might put a small tube in your vagina.



That is to help them look more closely at the inside of your vagina and your cervix.

Your cervix is at the top of your vagina.



Sometimes the doctor or nurse might take a tiny bit of your vagina.

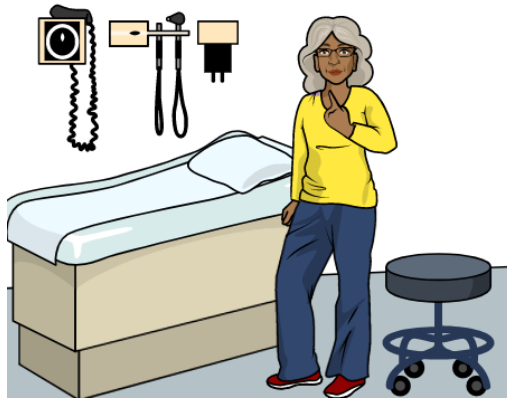
This is called a **biopsy**.

This is to check if you might have cancer now. Or if you might get cancer in the future.



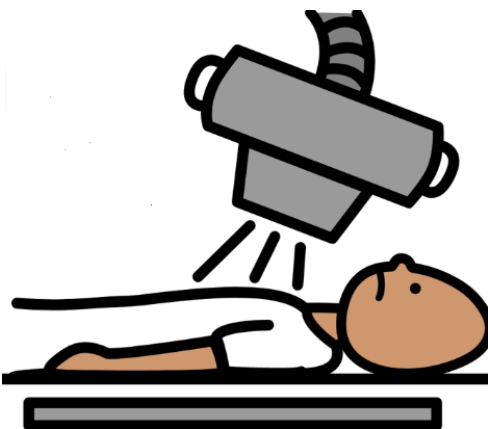
The doctor or nurse will try to make these tests as gentle as possible for you.

# What happens if you have vaginal cancer



## Having more tests

You will have more tests to see where the cancer is in your body.



The tests might include:

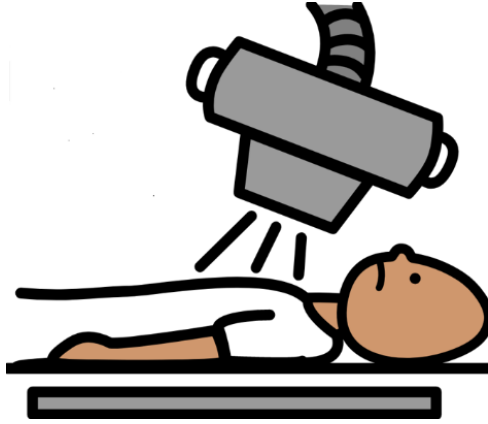
- Tests to look more closely inside your vagina.
- A scan to take pictures of what is happening in your body.



## Medical treatment

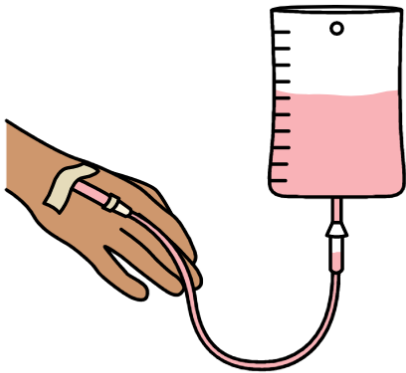
Your doctor will look at where the cancer is and how big it is.

They will tell you what treatment they think you should have.



The main treatment for vaginal cancer is called **radiotherapy**.

This is where a machine is used to try to get rid of the cancer.



You might get treatment called **radiotherapy** and **chemotherapy** together.

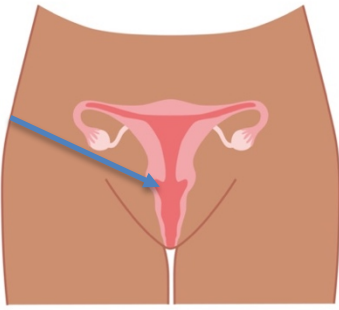
Chemotherapy is usually pills or a liquid to try to get rid of the cancer.

That can sometimes help to get rid of the cancer.

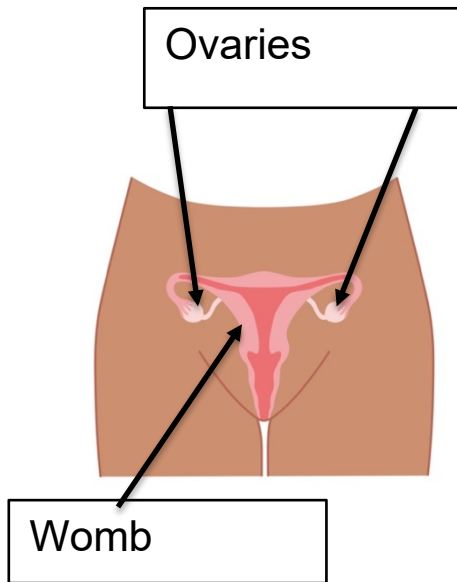


## Having an operation

You might also have an operation.



The operation might take away just the top part of your vagina.



Or the operation might take away all your vagina and some other things near your vagina.

Like your womb or ovaries.



The operation could also take away part of your bowel or bladder.

This is where your wee and poo is stored.



The doctor will talk to you about what treatment you can have.



## How to get more information

We have nurses you can speak to for more information and advice.

This service is private and free.

It is called **Ask Eve**.



Phone us free on: 0808 802 0019



Or email: [nurse@eveappeal.org.uk](mailto:nurse@eveappeal.org.uk)

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Review due: April 2027

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