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Vulvar Biopsy

A vulvar/vaginal biopsy takes one or more samples of tissue from the vulva. The vulva is the outer parts of the female genitals, including the labia, which are often called the lips, and the clitoris. The vagina is the opening that leads to the cervix, which is the entrance to the uterus. A biopsy is done to determine why you may have noticed itching, redness, swelling or changes in color to your vulva or vagina. It may also be done if you have a lump or sore that has recently appeared.

What to expect: The biopsy area will be cleaned with an antiseptic liquid. If you are having a vaginal biopsy, your provider will use a speculum to open your vagina. A speculum is the same instrument used during a Pap smear. Numbing medicine will be injected into the area that is going to be biopsied. One or more small pieces of tissue will be removed and sent to a lab for analysis. If you require stitches, dissolvable stitches will most likely be used, which do not need to be removed by your provider. You may feel some discomfort and pressure during the procedure.

Preprocedure: (before) Unless otherwise instructed, you do not need to do anything special before the biopsy. However, if you have the chance, it would be good to have a bath or shower on the day of the biopsy and to wash the skin gently but thoroughly. It will help to wear comfortable clothes and bring a panty liner.

Postprocedure: (after) Keep the area as clean and dry as possible. You may bathe or shower the next day. Gently pat the area dry with a clean towel.