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Pre-Cancerous Lesions

Vulvovaginal cancer accounts for approximately 6-7% of all gynecologic cancers in the United States¹. Many vulvovaginal skin disorders can increase your risk for cancer. For example, women with lichen sclerosus or lichen planus have a 3-5% increased risk of vulvar cancer. Surveillance and early detection is key to maintaining vulvovaginal health. Vulvoscopy is an in-office procedure in which a vulvoscope is used to examine the skin. The vulvoscope does not touch the patient and is used to view the vulvovaginal skin under magnification. Vulvoscopy is painless and provides early detection of skin changes normally seen in pre-cancerous lesions or cancers of the vulva.

If worrisome skin changes are present then a small biopsy may be required. This is done using a topical and local anesthesia. A small biopsy is typically obtained and usually does not require stitches. All tissue biopsies are then sent to be examined by a dermatopathologist and generally take 7-10 days for results to be received. Based upon the results a treatment recommendation is made.

Treatment options for pre-cancerous vulvovaginal lesions may include topical medications, CO2 laser treatment or removal of the skin. Treatment may be performed at home, in the office or occasionally at the hospital.

Identifying worrisome vulvovaginal skin changes and addressing these changes early is important to your health. Please make an appointment for a consultation if you have any concerns so that we can reassure and recommend the best treatment available.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, September 2014

