



Labial Fusion

January 2025

About this leaflet

This information leaflet has been developed by BritSPAG and is intended for young people with labial fusion and their families.

Key points:

- Labial fusion is where the lips of the vaginal opening become stuck together
- It is common under the age of 7 years
- There are usually no symptoms
- It usually resolves by itself over time
- Treatments are available

What is labial fusion?

Labial fusion (or adhesions) is a condition in which the lips of the vaginal opening become stuck together down the middle, leaving either a small opening or no visible opening.

It is a common condition affecting girls under the age of 7 years.

What causes labial fusion?

The labia are usually separate at birth and for a couple of months after birth because the mother's oestrogen (hormone) passes through the placenta to the baby. After 3-6 months these hormone levels get very low, which can cause the labia to stick together.

What are the symptoms?

In most cases there are no symptoms, and the vaginal opening is noticed to look different by a parent, relative or health care professional. This can be alarming as it can look like the vagina is absent.

Occasionally, urine can get trapped behind the fused labia and cause difficulty with toilet training, as there may be some dribbling after the child gets off the toilet.

Sometimes labial fusion can cause urine infections. The urine may also spray. You might find it helps to sit her on the toilet the wrong way round which opens the legs wider and may help the flow.

What treatment is available?

Fused labia do not normally cause any problems and separate on their own as the girl gets older and starts to produce her own hormones. Hence, in most cases, treatment is not necessary.

If symptoms do occur, your doctor may prescribe a hormone cream (containing oestrogen). A pea-sized amount should be applied over the line of fusion with a cotton bud or fingertip. The cream should be applied twice daily for 6 weeks. When the cream stops, the labia may fuse back together again. Sometimes the cream can cause a little bit of breast development which should go away when the treatment is stopped.

In very rare cases, the labia may need to be separated under a general anaesthetic.

Other things parents can do to help

Avoid soaps, shower gels, perfumes and bubble baths. If the surrounding skin is red and sore, your doctor might give you a moisturiser to be used as a soap substitute.

They may also give you an emollient to be used on the vulval area to keep the skin moist and healthy. Do not try and force the labia apart. This will be painful and will distress your child. It can damage the skin and may cause the child to be scared if they need to be examined again.

Once the child approaches puberty, the labia will separate and the fusion will not come back. They will not cause any long-term consequences.

Sources and acknowledgements

This information has been produced by the BritSPAG Executive Committee.

The information is evidence-based (at the time of production) and a full reference list is held by the BritSPAG Executive Committee.