

**Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)**

If you have a question, compliment, comment or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or [whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net](mailto:whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net)

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## Labial adhesions

## A patient's guide

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Date published: 11/10/2017  
Review date: 11/10/2019  
Ref: C&YP/Paed/LA/04

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## What is it?

Labial adhesions occur when the lips of the vagina (labia) stick together in the middle. They usually start to stick from the back leaving just a small opening at the front. A thin line can sometimes be seen where the labia are stuck together.

It is a very common condition in young girls. And can occur at any age, from six months of age until about ten years old.

## What causes it?

It is probably due to low oestrogen levels in the blood stream. Oestrogen is the main female hormone, which the body does not produce until the age of about ten-years-old. The condition may be more likely if there is inflammation or soreness of the vulva (the area around the vagina).

## What are the symptoms?

It does not usually cause any symptoms. Labial adhesions are usually noticed by chance. In a few cases there may be vaginal soreness or soreness passing urine.

## How is it diagnosed?

The diagnosis is made on examination by a doctor or nurse.

## Treatment

Labial adhesions do not need to be treated just because they are there. They will get better on their own towards puberty (that is from ten years onwards).

Treatment may be suggested for girls with vaginal soreness or soreness on passing urine. However, it can be reassuring for parents and doctors to see the adhesions to disappear and the best treatment is oestrogen cream.

Oestrogen cream is usually used for the treatment of older women with menopausal symptoms. It is not licensed for use in children but is safe if used in small amounts over a short-term period. It should not be used long-term because a small amount is absorbed into the body.

The cream should be applied to the adhesions daily around bedtime, for up to four weeks.

Rarely a small operation under general anaesthetic may be necessary to operate on the labia. Most doctors prefer to avoid surgery.

## Recurrence following treatment

Labial adhesions often return especially if the child is a long way from puberty.

## Long term, effects

Labial adhesions do not cause any problems in the long term. There are no problems with periods, fertility or sexual activity.

## If you have any questions

Please call the Paediatrics outpatients department on 020 7288 5883.