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With the aid of diagram, discuss the gross anatomy of the female external genitalia

The vulva (pudendum) refers to the external female genitalia. Its functions are threefold:

- Acts as sensory tissue during sexual intercourse
- Assists in micturition by directing the flow of urine
- Protects the internal female reproductive tract from infection.

Structures of the Vulva

The vulva is a collective term for several anatomical structures:

- **Mons pubis** – a subcutaneous fat pad located anterior to the pubic symphysis. It formed by the fusion of the labia majora.
 - They extend from the mons pubis posteriorly to the posterior commissure (a depression overlying the perineal body).
 - Embryologically derived from labioscrotal swellings
- **Labia majora** – two hair-bearing external skin folds.
 - They fuse anteriorly to form the hood of the clitoris and extend posteriorly either side of the vaginal opening.
 - They merge posteriorly, creating a fold of skin known as the fourchette.

