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**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.
* **Labia majora** – two hair-bearing external skin folds.

 **--** They extend from the mons pubis posteriorly to the posterior commissure (a depression overlying the perineal body).

 -- Embryologically derived from labioscrotal swellings

* **Labia minora** – two hairless folds of skin, which lie within the labia majora.

 -- 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.

 -- Embryologically derived from urethral folds

* **Vestibule** – the area enclosed by the labia minora. It contains the openings of the vagina (external vaginal orifice, vaginal introitus) and urethra.
* **Bartholin’s glands** – secrete lubricating mucus from small ducts during sexual arousal. They are located either side of the vaginal orifice.
* **Clitoris** – located under the clitoral hood. It is formed of erectile corpora cavernosa tissue, which becomes engorged with blood during sexual stimulation.

 --Embryologically derived from the genital tubercle.

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.