



Lichen Sclerosus et Atrophicus

Information for patients

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What is Lichen Sclerosus?

Lichen Sclerosus et Atrophicus (LSA) is a skin condition that can affect men, women or children.

It most commonly affects women after the menopause and girls before puberty. Skin lesions can occur anywhere on the body but are most frequently seen in the genital area (private parts). The cause is unknown.

What are the long term outcomes?

In many cases, lichen sclerosus resolves before or at puberty, but not in all cases.

Unlike in older women, there is no known risk of this condition becoming cancerous.

This condition does not affect periods, sexual health or future fertility.

How is the diagnosis made?

The diagnosis is usually made by your specialist by just looking at the area, as the appearances are characteristic.

Unlike in older women, biopsies of the skin are rarely needed.

What are the symptoms?

Lichen sclerosus can cause itching, soreness, bleeding or vaginal discharge. The itching and soreness can be very severe.

The skin on the outside of the vagina can appear thin and whitish, or there may be areas of bruising, thickening of the skin, or breaking of the skin. This can have quite an alarming appearance.

What treatments are available?

When the condition is mild, no treatment is needed. If there are symptoms of mild itching, a barrier cream such as zinc oxide (Sudocrem) or petroleum jelly (Vaseline) can be used.

In more severe cases, your doctor will prescribe a steroid cream which should be applied to the area twice daily for two weeks, and repeated as necessary.

This will cause the symptoms to disappear in most girls after 2-3 months, and no further treatment is necessary.