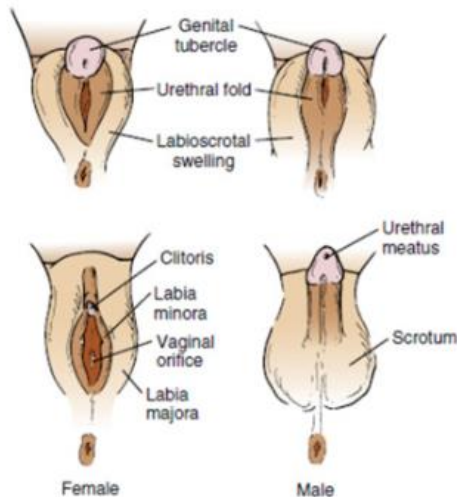
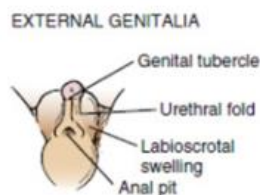


All information, content, and material of this website / handout is for informational purposes only and are not intended to serve as a substitute for the consultation, diagnosis, and/or medical treatment of a qualified physician or healthcare provider. The information is not intended to recommend the self-management of health problems or wellness. It is not intended to endorse or recommend any particular type of medical treatment. Should the reader have any health care related questions, that person should promptly call or consult your physician or healthcare provider. This information should not be used by any reader to disregard medical and/or health related advice or provide a basis to delay consultation with a physician or a qualified healthcare provider.

"Gender refers to a person's social and personal identity as male, female, or another gender such as non-binary. Gender may include how a person describes themselves ('gender identity'), and/or the gender a person publicly expresses ('gender expression') in their daily life. A person's current gender may differ from the sex recorded at their birth and may differ from what is indicated on their current legal documents. A person's gender may change over time. Some people may not identify with any gender." [stats NZ](#)

From reading social media you could be misled into thinking that pelvic pain is only a cis-female problem.



This is not true. If you have a pelvis, you can have pelvic pain - no matter what anatomy you have or had.

We also now recognize that persistent pain is a whole-body-and-brain problem and not a specific organ problem, so pelvic pain can affect anyone with a body and brain!

Long before we were born, when we were a fetus only about half an inch (1.3cm) long, every one of us had the same genital/pelvic structure. As our bodies continued to grow before birth, this anatomy then developed differently depending on the hormones and genes it was exposed to.

So, all pelvises and genitals are made from the same building blocks, just arranged a little differently. This means that the same types of tissue and the same nerve pathways are present in everyone.

If you have a pelvis then you have a pelvic floor.

This hammock of muscles at the lower end of the pelvis is responsible for control of bladder and bowel movements.

These muscles can also contribute to pain if they become overly tight. This can happen to any pelvic floor, unrelated to any other anatomy in the pelvis.

You need a brain to experience pain.

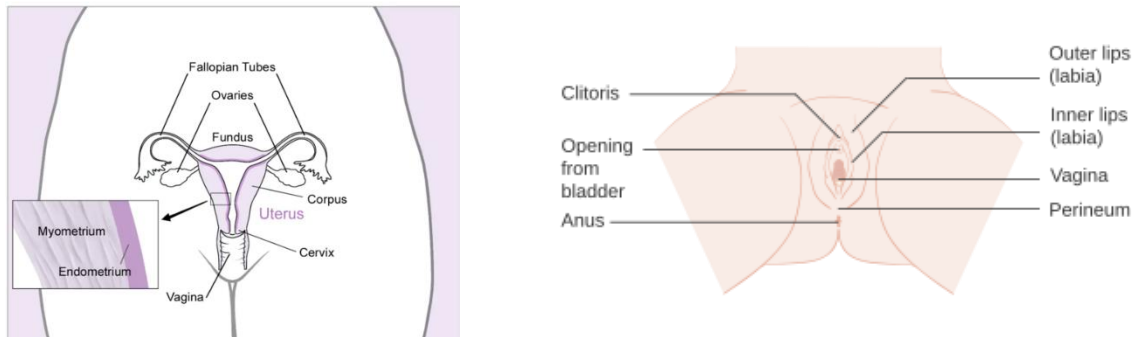
We now also recognize the importance of the spinal cord and brain in processing pain – and these structures are the same whatever your pelvic anatomy.

Figure 1: Available under a Creative Commons (CC-BY-NC-ND) license. A copy of the license can be viewed at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/>. Bookshelf ID: NBK279001 PMID: [25905232](#)

Figure 1

Factors in any of these building block tissues, nerves and the processing pathway to the brain can all contribute to pain and so it is vital that your care provider assesses all of these.

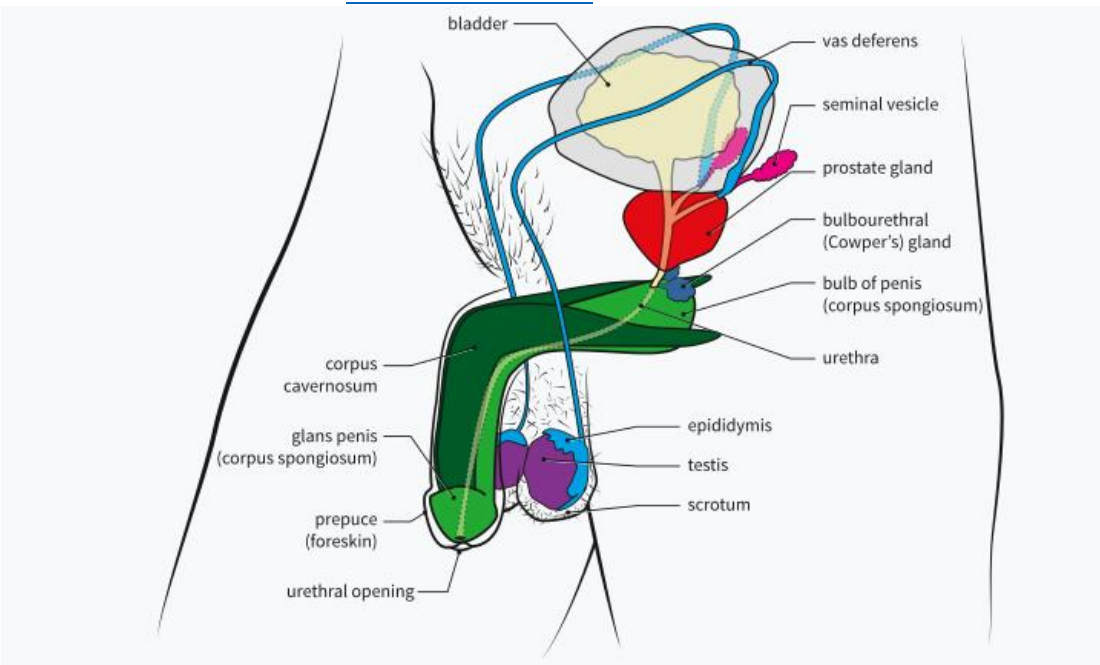
We recognize that some people find it very difficult to talk about their genital area or have different words they prefer to use for parts of their anatomy. You can use these anatomical pictures to help ensure that you and your clinicians are talking about the same thing. You might like to add your preferred terms



alongside and then take this along to your consultation.

Assigned female at birth

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