



The V Book: A Doctor's Guide to Complete Vulvovaginal Health

Elizabeth G. Stewart , Paula Spencer

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The Groundbreaking Guide Every Woman Needs

With **The V Book**, women will learn everything they need to know about the basics of vulvovaginal—or “V”—health, an essential yet often overlooked area of women’s health. Dr. Elizabeth G. Stewart, the nation’s foremost expert in vulvovaginal care and sexual-pain disorders, answers the questions about the all too common “V” ailments that women are embarrassed to discuss even with their doctors.

Drawing upon the latest medical research and two decades of experience treating thousands of women in her specialized gynecological practice, Dr. Stewart has compiled a wealth of information and advice. This comprehensive and authoritative guide for women of all ages includes:

- How your vulvovaginal concerns change throughout the life cycle, from your teens through menopause and beyond
- How to pick a good gynecologist, and how to ask the right questions
- Dos and don’ts of V hygiene—and why sometimes less is better
- The safest use of tampons, pads, and pantliners
- How to handle common symptoms, such as redness, itching, dryness, and discharge
- Which medical tests you should insist upon from your doctor
- Tips for safe and pleasurable sex, and what to do when sexual intercourse is painful
- The latest research on vulvodynia, the vaginal pain syndrome that won’t go away
- Diagnosing and treating yeast infections, allergies, and other ailments
- What to do if your doctor detects cancer or precancer cells

And much, much more...

The V Book: A Doctor's Guide to Complete Vulvovaginal Health Details

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From Reader Review The V Book: A Doctor's Guide to Complete Vulvovaginal Health for online ebook

Chrissie says

very educational!

Kate says

Useful, important reading for any woman (perhaps especially the young-- who can learn the basics, and women who are suffering vulvovaginal pain, and premenopausal/menopausal women.

Stewart's voice is sympathetic, her sense of humor gentle, her understanding broad. This book provided practical information and encouragement that I have not encountered in any other reading as a woman: it is very much a volume I would like to see on many more bookshelves.

And who knows? Maybe a man would find it interesting, insightful reading as well. We human beings can often make use of information that helps us to enter into each other's lives and better understand.

Shelley says

Library book #3

Melina says

Great, candid book about a subject that many women are afraid to ask about.

Salena says

A must read for any woman!

Jocilyn says

Easily the most approachable medical text I've ever sat down to read. Despite it's sometimes nightmarish subject matter, the V Book is extremely engaging and illuminating and if not for the great many acronyms I'd almost call it an easy read. Stewart's approach to the often difficult or confusing world of vulvovaginal care is very well structured and offers many personal examples for each chapter discussed. Yet, the V Book is by no means a short read--every chapter explores the topic thoroughly with many charts and procedures

explained. There was never a time when I felt I couldn't understand or needed something elaborated. There were likely fewer illustrations and photos than a medical student is used to seeing, but if this was their only text on the subject, they wouldn't lack knowledge. I'm not sure I would give it to a young teen, but certainly a high schooler could tackle this one and come away with a far better understanding than she might otherwise have had.

Mills College Library says

618.15 S8495 2002

Besha says

Finding a book on gynecology on my mother's bookshelf when I was 11 radically changed my life. I learned how my body worked and why it did things; I learned to ask questions and explore; I learned about intercourse and contraception and abortion. I grew up unafraid. I didn't really appreciate how important that education was for me until I started working in sex ed and realized that very few people get that kind of grounding in their own bodies.

The V Book is incredible. It covers the basics, but it also covers topics that most women don't understand: vaginal pH, bacterial balance, vulvodynia. It's a user's manual that encourages self-knowledge and agency. It troubleshoots, it tells women what to expect during appointments and what tests to ask for, and it teaches women how to find good doctors. It's the book I read, but with another twenty years of medical science and a better grasp of how to teach.

It's also nine years old at this point, and much of the information is out of date. For 2002, its information on vulvodynia is superb; for 2011 it's way behind the curve. Then again, in 2011 women still see half a dozen doctors before receiving a diagnosis of vulvodynia—this book is still radical simply by addressing the condition. I also disagree with some of the author's philosophy, but I'm pretty thoroughly steeped in harm reduction.

And I don't mind, because the fact that Stewart encourages women to take ownership of their bodies in a very straightforward way is pretty amazing. I'd like to buy a copy of this for every woman I know. If she publishes an updated edition, I probably will.

Marlana says

Ok I'm totally not done yet but just from what I have read so far this should be required reading for every women. Its so sad to me that more women don't have a better understanding of how their bodies work. There is so much shame and stigma surrounding the vagina that we shy away from the topic. We allow men more access to our bodies than we allow ourselves. This book is a wealth of information and talks about vulvovaginal health in a way that is so clear and so casual. I love it! Every women should read it. And come to think of it, men should read it too. They need to know what they're getting themselves into ;)

Adrianne Mathiowetz says

My sexual education began in sixth grade, when they divided the girls from the boys and told us about boobs and periods and where babies came from. I always assumed that, in the sex eds in the following years -- junior high, high school classes, experience and the gossip of friends -- that the details would flesh out (so to speak). After all, I was there to learn! I raised my hand, I asked the questions. I formed support groups and image-searched online.

Somehow, I still never even *knew that women could masturbate until I was sixteen*.

"Wait, what?" I cried at the book I was casually reading at the time, by some comedian whose name I can't recall. Of course, we had learned about male masturbation in sex ed. We were assured it was natural and okay and something every boy did.

We were just never taught that girls could do that.

Oops!

This essentially sums up how I feel about the sexual education of my youth. Guys had it all hanging out, sticking up, pokin' around; it looked like a grand old time. Girls got a diagram of where the baby festered inside them. We were sternly reminded, "it's okay to say no. Say no! You're not comfortable, are you? TELL HIM TO STOP. Oh and ps, don't worry, putting a tampon in doesn't mean you're not a virgin any more." (I have a whole separate hang-up on this obsession with virginity we apparently still have, but that's not really relevant to this review.) Make him wear a condom. MAKE HIM WEAR A CONDOM. HE DOESN'T WANT TO WEAR A CONDOM SO FORCE HIM TO DO IT, CHRIST. (Hang-up number two from sex ed: all guys are apparently assholes.)

Before I went to college, my stepmom gave me a copy of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. This was great, positive, all-encompassing. If you just want a basic one-paragraph answer to any physical or general emotional problem you could have, *Our Bodies, Ourselves* is your index. All-natural labor? Breast exams? Ovarian cancer? Check, check and check. But it doesn't really go into detail, and after a while, I stopped consulting it.

So this year, when I began having some serious problems, and when doctor after doctor forgot that they'd even seen me a month ago, when they didn't perform any basic exam at all and just prescribed me prescription after prescription, playing a glorious guessing game with my health: I decided it was time to do some of my own research. Amazon reviews led me to *The V Book*.

This is an incredibly accessible, incredibly well-written, friendly and good-humored guide to the genitalia you were, perhaps, never told you had. (My new favorite thing is to troll around the internet and correct everyone who says "vagina" when they mean "vulva.") What questions should you ask at your next pap smear? What kinds of tests do you want to make sure they're doing? What do you have to look forward to, five years from now? How do estrogen/testosterone levels affect your skin, your libido, your lubrication? An entire chapter devoted to yeast infections! An entire chapter devoted to vulvodynia, which spellcheck doesn't even think is a goddamn *word*! Lord, it's all so interesting! With tables and diagrams, fun historical facts and asides, but most importantly: a really approachable tone. None of this "all women are holy goddesses" bullshit (Cunt, anyone?). None of this "we refer to 'down there' as 'down there'" shame rhetoric (I'm looking

at you, Cosmo.)

"Who cares what's normal?" this book asks. "Are you comfortable? Does it hurt? Take a look, it's interesting."

This book made me realize I had to change doctors. But it also made me realize that I had to pay more attention to myself: take note of where and when things hurt, and where and when things were fine. I had to take responsibility for knowing the names, how to take care of it all, and what specific questions to ask. (Here's a tip they won't teach you in health class: having issues? Stop wearing underpants! Also: think you have a yeast infection? You probably don't.)

Just one thing and then I'm out:

I have one issue with one sentence in this book: in reference to reusable cotton pads, Stewart says "a bit cumbersome and labor-intensive to care for, they have particular appeal to environmentally-conscious women". She also dismisses the Keeper and similar cups as highly likely to leak, uncomfortable to wear, and basically more trouble than they're worth.

It's highly unfortunate that she brush off alternate protection in this way. I know for myself, as well as my friends who use a Keeper/fabric pads, one of the main reasons we do it is *because* they're less cumbersome and labor-intensive than traditional, chuck 'em pads and tampons. Disposable pads are sticky, smelly, crunchy diapers, prone to making one feel dirty and disgusting. I had to devote half of my under-the-sink space for them, and the garbage had to go out three times a week. Reusable ones? Soft and pretty. I rinse them in cold water then throw them in the laundry bag. No big deal. Tampons need to be changed every four hours or you risk TSS. I empty my Keeper once a day. (And all of this is assuming, of course, that you remembered to buy pads/tampons the last time you went shopping, which I never did. Not a problem with the Keeper/Gladrags. Huzzah!)

But in general? This book is the most enlightening thing I've read in my entire life. Highly recommended, to the young and old, the informed and the uninformed. Entertaining, informative, and dare I say important.

Dainise says

This is an amazing reference book that I consult often.

Alexis says

My science class loved this book! All women should read it.

Shannon says

Read it.

Kate says

Best book I have ever read about female genitalia. Astonishingly comprehensive and lucid.

Annie Wang says

If you don't know or love it, who else will?

Jenifer says

On the one hand, this book has fantastic anatomical and basic health information that every person with a vagina & vulva should be aware of. It also has a wealth of information on specific diseases, though I'd be wary of using any of it without also having the guidance of a doctor.

I gave it three stars because I had several issues with the writing - a horrifying account of menopause complete with a strong push for HRT that made no mention of potential links to cancer, a statement that smart sex is necessarily monogamy, to name but two - that made me think my time was better spent reading *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. There's a lot of useful info in here for sure, but it wouldn't be my first recommendation to others who are older and already have a basic understanding of their vaginal health. It **WOULD**, however, possibly be a book I'd make mandatory reading for people 15-21 who may be learning these things for the first time. That is where the book really shines, I think: critical information for newly sexually active and bodily aware young adults.
