



LABIAPLASTY : more about labia minora reduction

BENADIBA Laurent

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Part 1

Introduction

Labiaplasty is the surgical term for labia minora reduction. This operation has become popular among plastic surgery patients because physical discomfort and cosmetic concerns are always combined. Demand for this operation is becoming common among young patients who have been nourishing a complex disturbing their love life since their early adolescent years. There are several possible corrective surgical techniques, the postoperative courses vary significantly. The traditional method (longitudinal resection) remains the most widely used, but requires resection of the larger part of the labia minora. Therefore, the V-plasty technique seems more appropriated. The benefits, technical details, complications and postoperative course of the V-plasty technique are detailed here.

Part 2
What is labiaplasty ?

Labiaplasty is a cosmetic genital surgical procedure to reduce the size or reshape the labia minora (inner lips) located on the outside of the vagina . The goal is to achieve a more natural aesthetic appearance, reduce discomfort and improve self-confidence.This surgery is also called Labia reduction ,Labial reshaping or female genital surgery “.

Many women are born with large or irregular labia. Others develop this condition after childbirth or with aging. The appearance of the enlarged labia can cause embarrassment with sexual partner or even loss of self esteem. Some women just want to look "prettier" like the women they see in magazines or in films.

Chronic labial irritation can sometimes appear when women wear tight clothing. Discomfort can appear during sexual relation, sports or other physical activities.

Labiaplasty can greatly enhance the cosmetic appearance of the outer vagina enabling many women to have greater self esteem. Women whose labia become irritated and painful will often find relief after surgery.

Part 3
Reasons for the surgery

As previously mentioned, the two main reasons are discomfort and aesthetics. Many women feel uncomfortable or irritated when wearing tight clothing, having sexual relations, or exercising (especially with horse-riding and cycling). Sometimes, they can even feel pain and get hurt. Other women just want to look "prettier". Today, with a heightened awareness and acceptance of sexuality in our society, this demand is becoming common. These women often feel embarrassed or self-conscious in front of their partners.

Cosmetic Reasons: Some women are unhappy or embarrassed with their labia appearance. This often affects sexual relationships and self-esteem. Some women just want to look as beautiful as they can for themselves and their partner. With the increasing openness of society to sexuality and greater exposure to sexually explicit materials, labiaplasty is becoming increasingly popular.

Medical Reasons: Some women have discomfort from enlarged labia. This can be caused by exercise, sexual activity or from wearing tight clothes. Some of these women feel pain when doing sports or during sexual activities. In this case, surgery is highly recommended.

Many young women are now turning to the surgical methods available to correct these problems. The reasons are that young people are armed with the knowledge of the surgery and thus many of them are moving forward with labiaplasty while still young.

For women and young girls who have a physical problem with their labia—such as large, or asymmetric labia—having labiaplasty performed earlier can result in an anatomical correction that results in greater patient self-esteem as they mature.

There isn't any "normal" labia size. Normal labia size is whatever you choose, based on your own self-esteem. If you're happy with your existing labia, whether symmetrical or asymmetrical, and you have no problems with the way they look, then, in your case, "normal" labia is whatever you choose, or accept. The point to remember is that with labiaplasty, you can literally pick up and choose the size or shape of your labia, and if you wish, to kind of reshape your anatomy.

Part 4

The surgery techniques

Few years ago, the most frequent technique consisted in taking off the excess of labial tissue by following a spindle touching the skin . It is called the Longitudinal technique. This surgery creates a scar all along the surface of the minor lip.

The disadvantage of this procedural technique is that the scar is on the line of contact with the clothes. This can be really irritating and painful and can lead to discomfort during sexual activity.

Many patients who have undergone this kind of operation complain about the operation consequences and, in certain cases, about bad after-effect such as feeling pain during sexual intercourse.

Nowadays, rather than amputation, a wedge of protuberant labial tissue is excised by 2 "V" flaps and the labial edges are reshaped. A lot of patients have undergone this aesthetic operation with excellent results. No complications occurred. The new technique is relatively simple and can greatly enhance the patient's self-confidence.

Our technique is based on a two "V" shaped resection of the mucous membrane surplus which is located at the anterior and posterior of the labia minora. Removal of the excess of labial tissue is performed without touching the base of the labia. This enable sufficient resection even in case of significant hypertrophy. Successful results of this new technique can only be obtained if the surgeon respects these several key points: careful planning and drawings before infiltration, perfect hemostasis, first stitch placed at the cutaneous mucosal junction and a three layer closure by 4-0 Vycril.

We performed this V-V technique in 12 cases which have all been associated to a high satisfaction rate. None of these patients has been complaining about vaginal tightening, dyspareunia(pain during sexual activity), painful scars or loss of erotic sensation.

The technique described here, derived from the technique of Alter and Palua .It has several benefits:

- 1.by placing the two V at the thirds anterior and posterior, we avoid a central scar and thus reduce the possibilities of sexual dysfunction (painful introitus,etc.)

2. in case of important hypertrophy instead of performing a large reduction associated which increasing risk of dehiscence,we perform two smaller reductions

3. we preserve the free border of the labia

4. by performing two smaller resections we assure a more gradual anteroposterior color change providing a more aesthetically pleasant appearance.

Labia reduction is normally carried out in a clinic or an hospital under general or local anesthesia and involves a 45 minutes operation where the surgeon removes the excess of labial tissue and reshapes the labia in order to achieve a natural cosmetic appearance with minimal scarring and restore your self-confidence. An additional hour is spent in our recovery room under the supervision of a nurse.

Depending on the surgeon's preference, some use lasers and others use scalpels. Others use Iris scissors for labiaplasty (the same instrument typically used for eye surgery (Blepharoplasty), and face-lifts (Rhytidectomy). While the laser is fine for long straight incisions it doesn't leave the natural edge as an Iris Scissor does. This makes the labia look normal when the surgery is finished. When working on the labia, and making the correct incisions in the right areas, there rarely is any apparent visible scar.

Part 5
Risks and medical complications

Every patient should be aware of the risks and complications that can appear after the procedure even if they are quite rare .

Here is a list of the major complications:

- Desertion of the stitches : partial or total especially in case of trauma
- lateness of healing which delay the period for recovering (especially if the patient smokes)
- local infection
- bruise
- Dyspareunia , that are generally transitional
- cutaneous necrosis can appear but generally it is quite limited and localized.

Significant necrosis are in fact quite rare and often linked to resection excess

- Sensibility alterations is frequent such as lower degree of sensibility but this side-effect disappear after 3 to 6 months.

Many women don't realize how important it is to seek the surgical advice and experience of a surgeon who has performed hundreds of labiaplasty operations . Remember that once tissue is removed, it rarely can be replaced , if ever. Labiaplasty or vaginoplasty operations are specialized areas which are not usually taught during medical training. It is always advisable to do it with a surgeon who has experience in performing numerous labiaplasty or vaginoplasty operation .

Part 6
After the surgery : FAQ

What Is The Postoperative Period Like?

You will feel discomfort on the first days but it will gradually decrease. All patients are sent home with prescriptions for pain medications and antibiotics. Full recovering takes approximately six weeks. Usually, sutures used are dissolvables and therefore do not need to be removed. Dissolvable sutures are exclusively used in labiaplasty. Depending on the specific type of suture (there are a few different types), and the location of the suture, they typically dissolve at 7 – 21 days (some dissolve in 7-10 days), allowing tissues to heal in the most natural way.

How Many Post Operative Medical Visits Are Required After Labiaplasty Surgery?

We recommend post operative medical visits after two, four, six, and eight weeks following the surgery to insure proper healing and excellent results.

When Can I Return To Work after a Labiaplasty Surgery?

Most patients return to work in four to seven days after surgery. Patient can ask the doctor for excuse letters.

When Can I start again getting exercise ?

We recommend avoiding strenuous exercise for at least four weeks, and if it is possible a little bit more than that.

When will I be able to have a normal sexual activity?

You can go back to normal sexual activity after six to eight weeks following the labiaplasty surgical procedure.

Will labiaplasty surgery result in a decrease of sensation?

For the majority of women ,clitoris is the structure associated with sensitive pleasure, not labias. Therefore, you should not notice any loss of pleasurable sensation after surgery.

Will Labiaplasty alter the skin surrounding my clitoris?

Usually this area is not altered during the surgery. Some women do have excessive skin in this area and it can be trimmed to give a more pleasing and natural appearance at the time of surgery. This question can be discussed during the consultation.

Will my sexual partner notice a Difference after labiaplasty ?

If the labias were interfering with sexual intercourse, both of you will notice an improvement. Visually, your partner should notice that your labia are now smaller and better proportioned.

Part 7

Cost and reimbursement

Global cost for this procedure is about 2000€ in France . This cost includes :

- The stay in the clinic or in the hospital
- The fees for the surgeon and his/ her assistant
- The fees for the anesthetist

Costs, medical care and Health Insurance

In rare cases (major hypertrophy) , labiaplasty can be considered as a reconstructive surgery act. Therefore the procedure can be partly covered by the Health Insurance.

The rest (charge exceeding the statutory fee) has to be payed by the patient. This charge can be reimbursed by your mutual insurance company depending on your contract.

Part 8
**About other female intimate surgical
procedures**

They are several other possible procedures for female intimacy :

Tightening of the Vagina (vaginoplasty) - The enlarged vagina is a frequent problem after childbirth. The vagina is stretched severely during childbirth and never returns to its pre-pregnancy size. The surgical procedure for this problem is called a posterior repair or vaginoplasty. Vaginoplasty and labiaplasty can be performed at the same time.

Un-hooding of the Clitoris - Some women have thickened skin over the clitoris. This can interfere with stimulation and decrease sensitivity. When this hood is removed surgically, the woman may enjoy greater and more intense stimulation that can lead to more intense orgasms.

This surgery is analogous to circumcision for men. Some surgeons won't perform this delicate operation because the innervation (neuron cell density) of the clitoral node is many times more concentrated than in any of the surrounding tissue areas—therefore, if not done correctly, clitoral unhooding can result in heightened sensation of the node by normal movements, and in some cases can create considerable discomfort. Surgeons who perform clitoral unhooding usually determine the extent of sensitivity of the clitoris before proceeding by testing the area with cold and warm swabs. Patients should only have this procedure performed by a surgeon who has extensive experience in this area and has performed many clitoral unhoodings.

Labia Majora (outer lips) Reduction - This common anatomical variation may be worsened by childbirth or by weight gain or loss. It may be improved by liposuction. In severe cases, surgical reduction is necessary and can be considered as reconstructive surgery.

Reduction of the Mons Pubis - When a woman has excessive fatty deposits in the hair bearing area of the lower abdomen, medically referred as the mons pubis, she often feels that she looks like a man when wearing pants. This can be corrected by liposuction.

Abdominoplasty - The enlarged abdomen is often a consequence of weight gain or childbirth, and can be improved by a surgical procedure called a "tummy-tuck" or abdominoplasty, while tightening the abdominal muscles.

Elevating the aged Pubis and Escutcheon - As we age, gravity causes all parts of our body to descend. Therefore, the pubic hair, mons and vaginal region also descend, causing an aged appearance. This operation is often combined with an abdominoplasty.

Filling or plumping out the shrunken or **atrophied labia majora or minora** by fat injection.



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