



RESHAPE & RESTORE

# Labiaplasty

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## Introduction

Reshape & Restore has put together this factsheet for anyone who is considering labiaplasty. We understand that undergoing a surgical procedure is not often an easy decision, and you may have many questions.

The aim of this factsheet is to outline the details of the labiaplasty procedure, explaining how it works, how it's carried out and what to expect from the results. Being fully informed about the potential risks and complications of surgery, can help to answer any concerns which may help you in making a clear decision.

Every patient's surgery is a unique experience and the approach we take at Reshape & Restore is tailored to suit your specific needs. It is important to understand that as the requirements of each patient differ, so does the outcome. This will depend on a number of factors and with our guidance, we can help you to understand the realistic results that can be achieved.

## Why have labiaplasty?

Labiaplasty is a procedure that uses surgical techniques to reduce enlarged labia. The labia are the flaps of skin that protect the vaginal opening and the urethra. There are two sets of labia - inner (labia minora) and outer (labia majora) - which can become enlarged over time. The uses of the vagina, namely childbirth, can contribute to the stretching of the skin and tissues within the labia. This may cause one or both sets to sag or protrude, which can cause some functional difficulties or physical discomfort. Labiaplasty is often requested by our female patients who wish to reduce the size and protrusion of the inner or outer labia (or both). As well as helping to eradicate discomfort, this procedure can also improve the physical appearance of the female genitals. Many women feel self-conscious about the way their vagina looks, and feel this impacts their confidence in an intimate situation.

Particularly large or protruding labia can also cause self-consciousness if the woman is aware that this is noticeable when wearing fitted clothing, underwear or swimwear.

## The consultation

The consultation is the most important part of any treatment journey. Not only does it give you the chance to meet your surgeon, it provides the opportunity to discuss what is concerning you and what you are hoping to achieve from surgery. There are a variety of factors we need to consider before recommending any procedure, including: general health, skin type, risk of bleeding, how well you're likely to heal, smoking status, alcohol consumption and medications. We also examine the labia, and we'll talk through the appearance you are likely to achieve. We'll provide information about how the procedure is carried out, any potential risks and complications, and what to expect during the recovery period. The aim of the consultation is to give you a better understanding of what undergoing surgery involves and what it can mean for you. As there is a lot of information to absorb, we don't expect you to make a decision there and then. It is our policy at Reshape & Restore to offer a second consultation at a later date so you have had some time to think, and consider the details of the operation - including reading any information leaflets that have been provided by us. In many cases a person goes away and finds they have other questions that weren't thought of at the time, which can then be addressed at the second consultation. Only when both you and us are completely certain that undergoing surgery is the right option for you, will we make an appointment. During this session we will also take some photographs of your 'before' appearance and give you the opportunity to speak with past patients - this has proven to be very valuable for many of our patients.

## What happens during the procedure?

We often perform labia reshaping under a local anaesthetic, which is treated as a day case procedure. There are a few ways we can approach the labiaplasty, which will be discussed at the consultation and will depend on your specific concerns and preferred outcome.

In most cases we make a V shaped or a straight line incision on the labia. From here we can then trim the skin and tissues, extracting enough to reduce its overall size. We may treat the labia on one or both sides, depending on your concerns, removing the right amount of skin and tissue to ensure a balanced result. Dissolvable stitches are most suitable for this procedure, due to the delicate nature of the skin and tissues in this area.

On the day of your surgery, you will be asked not to eat or drink anything from midnight, and you should not apply any creams or lotions to the genitals, or surrounding area. Our patients are not usually required to stay in hospital overnight when using a local anaesthetic, and we will conduct a thorough assessment before you are discharged to ensure you are fit and well, and have recovered sufficiently from the operation. We usually advise that you have someone drive you home from the hospital and also to stay with you on your first night at home.

## What can i expect after the procedure?

Before we discharge you we will ensure you have been provided with suitable pain relief advice and some ointment to apply regularly to the wounds while they heal. It is not recommended that you use aspirin or brufen as these medications can increase bruising and the risk of postoperative bleeding. We will provide you with appropriate aftercare advice and will arrange your first follow up appointment - usually 7 - 10 days after surgery.

Your genitals will have some degree of swelling, tenderness and bruising, immediately following the procedure. The skin may also feel tight, and you may experience some temporary numbness. These effects are expected to gradually settle over the next few weeks, and we ask that you keep the genitals dry for 1 week. At your first appointment we will assess your rate of healing. You should then be able to wash your genitals, using non-perfumed products and warm water. When drying this area it is better to pat it gently

using a soft towel, as rubbing will be uncomfortable and may disturb the wounds.

Having surgery can be hard on the body and it will use a lot of energy while it heals and recovers. You will benefit from taking it easy for a few weeks, only undertaking light duties and keeping activity levels low. Heavy lifting, rigorous exercise, swimming and the gym should be avoided for between 4 and 6 weeks, and you should also avoid sexual activity for at least 4 weeks. You can expect to need up to 1 week off work, depending on your job, when you should feel more comfortable to drive and resume normal daily activities. Our aftercare programme entails a series of follow-up appointments made approximately 1 week, 6 weeks, 3 months and 6 months after surgery. Your healing, recovery and development of results will be closely monitored during this time, and we will provide you with any necessary advice to ensure the outcome is effective.

## What are the risks of surgery?

People who undergo a surgical procedure are usually concerned about how much scarring will be left behind. At Reshape & Restore we use modern surgical techniques which consider where incisions are made, and where scars will form. As the main cuts are small, scarring is usually less noticeable. In some cases a person is prone to developing hypertrophic scars, which can be particularly thick or raised from the skin. During our follow-up procedures we will monitor how your scars are developing and if hypertrophic scars are becoming likely, there are ways we can treat this in the future.

During the consultation we will discuss potential complications, which are always a risk when undergoing surgery. Haematoma is a condition where blood collects under the skin, and is a risk in the first few hours after the procedure. If this occurs we will need to take you back to the theatre to have it removed. Infection is fairly uncommon and careful aftercare is often the best way to prevent an infection from developing, and a course of antibiotics will help to clear it up. We mentioned temporary numbness as a possible side effect, but in some very uncommon cases this can be prolonged. It happens if the nerves are bruised and don't start to work as quickly as expected. Although it can cause some alarm, in most cases it does resolve itself in time and doesn't remain permanent. We will discuss how this is managed at the consultation. It is important to maintain

your mobility while your body is recovering. You should try to move around regularly as you may risk developing Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT), a condition where a blood clot forms in the leg. This only happens in around 1% of cases and we provide medication for you to take after the procedure to minimise the chance of this occurring.

If at any time you are concerned with your healing, or experience prolonged side effects / a burning sensation / discharge from the wounds, you are welcome to contact the Reshape & Restore team. Particular symptoms to look out for include: temperature above 38.5, pain and discomfort that is not relieved through painkillers, bleeding or discharge from the wounds and sudden swelling at the wounds.

## What results can i expect?

Following the labia reshaping procedure, your vagina's appearance will have noticeably improved. Smaller labia will also be less visible in fitted clothing, underwear and swimwear, giving you more confidence. Removing the skin and tissues means that the size and protrusion of the affected labia will have significantly decreased, which may feel much more comfortable, especially when exercising, cycling and during sexual intercourse.

It may take some weeks for the side effects to disappear completely which is why it's so important to take care of your body during the healing process. Due to swelling and bruising, the outcome may not be apparent, which is why we advise that you wait for a few months before deciding if the procedure was a success. This is also why we arrange a series of follow-up appointments, enabling us to assess how well you're healing and how well the results are developing. We can also adjust your aftercare if healing is showing signs of delay, intervening where necessary to ensure further complications do not arise.

## Disclaimer

We are unable to make any guarantees to the outcomes of your procedure as the results of cosmetic surgery differ from patient to patient. It is prudent to note that whilst potential outcomes may have been discussed, these can sometimes be modest. Beauty is entirely subjective, and therefore what is good / achievable for one person may not be good / achievable for another. We can only guide you to what we expect your outcome to be, during the consultation. It is also possible that post

procedure, other areas of the body may become more noticeable such as: arms, flanks or thighs. This is more common with procedures such as breast augmentation or tummy tuck.

Surgery comes with no guarantee of happiness and cosmetic surgery should not be undertaken lightly. Before proceeding, you must be certain that you can cope both physically and mentally should any complications arise as a result of your decision to undergo a surgical procedure. For this reason we recommend that you do not hide the fact from friends or family, rather you involve them in the decision making process so you can be sure you have an adequate support network should you need it.