

Labioplasty

General

Sometimes the inner labia (labia minora) are too large and this causes difficulty and discomfort whilst wearing certain clothes and during activities such as sex, cycling horse-riding etc. The appearance itself may be distressing or embarrassing. The labia minora often then take on a "rugous" or hyperkeratotic appearance which means that the skin is reacting to the increase in physical trauma or friction. It is a straightforward procedure, in most cases, to achieve functional and cosmetic improvement. I will review the operation site and your expectations with you prior to surgery commencing. A degree of asymmetry is normal and can be expected after the operation (not identical on both sides). As a rule of thumb in most women the labia minora will usually lie just within the cover provided by the labia majora, but this varies. Increasingly common, this surgery is usually able to be performed as a day procedure.

What happens?

You will be administered a general (sleeping) anaesthetic. Excessive skin length is removed surgically. The skin edges are closed with a dissolving suture.

Healing and the immediate post-operative phase

Whether you stay just the day or overnight depends principally on the extent of the surgery required (determined by careful pre-operative assessment), the individual's response to the anaesthetic and need for pain relief. Healing is achieved in the body by an inflammatory response which is maximal at around 7-10 days, so discomfort and swelling may increase for a few days.

Bleeding

You may have some spotting, less than a period, which will settle prior to discharge from hospital, but may continue for some days. Heavier or recurrent bleeding is usually due to infection by bacteria which normally inhabit the perineum/vagina, or rarely due to discharge of a collection of blood from the area of the repair (haematoma). If you are bleeding heavily please notify me via the call service. Antibiotics are administered during your operation in order to prevent infection, but this may still occur later in a small percentage of women.

Pain

Local anaesthetic is injected into the operation site and surrounding tissues, which lasts around 4-6 hours. As it wears off, oral pain relievers will take over.

You may experience a sore throat which is due to the breathing (endotracheal) tube used by the anaesthetist during the operation. By the time you are discharged you should be comfortable on oral analgesics such as Voltaren, Panadol or Panadeine for sore throat and wound pain. Take pain relief as often as needed and prior to retiring to help you to sleep. You will naturally tend to wean yourself from these as need subsides, over the ensuing week.

Diet

Your appetite and possibly your senses of smell and taste will be disturbed for a while. Maintain a sensible light diet and fluid intake.

Complications Specifically Related to Labioplasty

- **Infection**
Infection is uncommon however if you experience a marked increase in pain and swelling that doesn't respond to simple analgesics, malodorous discharge or feel feverish then please contact me.
- **Cosmetic Result Is Not As Expected**
Sometimes due to alteration in the wound and the healing process, the anatomical result may not be what was anticipated pre-operatively. There is always some slight degree of asymmetry, i.e., difference between the two sides after healing has occurred.

Washing

Avoid heavily perfumed soaps, gentle sponging with a soap-free gel and tepid water is generally all that is required. Do not apply antiseptic creams/ Dettol/ Betadine unless directed by me.

Dizziness / Loss of Concentration

This may be due to the anaesthetic or analgesics, especially those such as Panadeine. Avoid operating machinery or making important decisions for at least 24 hours.

Follow-up

At your six-week check I will generally perform an examination to check healing. Queries may be directed to my rooms on 03 9530 8131; after hours or urgent queries should be directed to my call service on 9387-1000. Your stitches DO NOT need to be taken out. They will dissolve over a period of weeks.

