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## Genital Cosmetic Surgery for Women

Cosmetic surgery is common these days, with people sporting “new” noses, fuller lips, and reshaped ears. Procedures like breast augmentation, face lifts, and tummy tucks are widely advertised. It seems like any body part can be surgically altered.

So why not the female genitals?

Some women are dissatisfied with the appearance of their genitals or the size of their vagina. Others feel that sex would be more satisfying if their genitals were shaped differently. Genital cosmetic surgery aims to address some of these issues. But is cosmetic surgery on this very private area safe and effective? Are there alternatives?

In this post, we’ll discuss the more popular procedures, the potential risks, and the reasons why women consider this route.

*What types of genital cosmetic surgery procedures are available?*

Women may have surgery on external and/or internal genitals. Here are some examples:

- **Vaginoplasty.** Sometimes called “vaginal rejuvenation,” this procedure involves removing tissue from the vaginal lining to make it tighter. Women may choose this surgery if they feel their vagina is too loose. (This happens to some women after childbirth.)

Women may also have vaginoplasty to please partners who prefer a tighter vagina.

- **Labiaplasty.** This surgery involves changing the shape or size of the inner lips (labia minora) or outer lips (labia majora) outside their vagina. For some women, large labia can be uncomfortable and easily irritated. Others simply want to make their labia smaller or more symmetrical.

Labia majora augmentation is a procedure that makes this area larger.

- **Hymenoplasty** (“revirginization”). The hymen is a thin membrane that usually tears during a woman’s first intercourse. Surgery can reconstruct the hymen, giving the appearance of virginity.

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- **G-spot amplification.** The G-spot is a highly sensitive area inside the vagina that, when stimulated, gives intense sexual pleasure to many women. This procedure aims to enlarge that area with injections of collagen to the vaginal wall.
- **Clitoral hood reduction** (“hoodectomy”). Stimulation of the clitoris often brings women to orgasm, but the hood – an area of skin that covers it – can get in the way. Clitoral hood reduction removes some of this skin so that more of the clitoris is available for stimulation.
- **Vulval lipoplasty.** Women undergoing this procedure have liposuction to reduce the size of the mons pubis, an area of fatty tissue that cushions the pubic area.

### *Why do women have genital cosmetic surgery?*

There are a variety of reasons. Some women are embarrassed by the appearance of their genitals and feel that changing them will improve their self-esteem and confidence. Others feel that the surgery will make sex more pleasurable.

Why are women sensitive about their genital appearance? Pornography might provide some clues. Comparing their own genitals to those of female models and actresses make some women feel insecure, as if their own genitals are abnormal. They may worry about turning off a partner.

Also, many women [remove their pubic hair](#), which leaves their more of their genitals visible. The mons pubis, for example, is typically covered with pubic hair, but once shaved, its shape and size are more noticeable.

### *What are the risks?*

Genital cosmetic surgery has not been widely researched. In a committee opinion reaffirmed in 2014, the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) states, “No adequate studies have been published assessing the long-term satisfaction, safety, and complication rates for these procedures.” ACOG opposes genital cosmetic surgery.

Infection, pain, and scarring can sometimes occur. Some women experience changes in sexual sensation or painful intercourse after surgery. Others find that they are still unhappy with their genital appearance.

### *Are there alternatives?*

Many women don’t realize that female genitals come in all shapes and sizes. For example, labia can vary in color and are often asymmetrical. What women consider “abnormal” may very well fall into the “normal” category.

It's also important that sexual pleasure is not driven solely by anatomy. While exposing more of the clitoris, enlarging the G-spot, or simply feeling more sexually self-confident might increase pleasure, many other factors contribute to sexual satisfaction. Communication with a partner, emotional ties, and intimacy are all important, too. Sometimes, pleasure can be enhanced by addressing these areas first.

What should a woman do if she's dissatisfied with her genitals? The first step is talking to a doctor. It may be worth trying other measures, such as counseling, sex therapy, or pelvic floor physical therapy.

Talking the situation over with a partner may help, too. A partner may provide reassurance that genital appearance is not as important as the woman herself.

If a woman decides to move forward with surgery, she should make sure her practitioner is qualified and experienced. She should also fully understand the potential risks and know what to expect in terms of recovery and results.

## Resources

### *American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists*

“Vaginal ‘Rejuvenation’ and Cosmetic Vaginal Procedures”

(September 2007. Reaffirmed in 2014.)

<http://www.acog.org/Resources-And-Publications/Committee-Opinions/Committee-on-Gynecologic-Practice/Vaginal-Rejuvenation-and-Cosmetic-Vaginal-Procedures>

### *The Atlantic*

Berliet, Melanie

“Designer Parts: Inside the Strange, Fascinating World of Vaginoplasty”

(April 2, 2012)

<http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2012/04/designer-parts-inside-the-strange-fascinating-world-of-vaginoplasty/255188/>

*Sexual Medicine Society of North America*

“Motivations for Labial Reduction Surgery”

<http://www.sexhealthmatters.org/for-healthcare-providers/motivations-for-labial-reduction-surgery>

*WebMD*

“Vaginoplasty and Labiaplasty”

(March 26, 2013)

<http://www.webmd.com/women/vaginoplasty-and-labiaplasty-procedures>

*Women’s Health (Australia)*

Braun, Kristen

“Genital cosmetic surgery”

(2013)

<http://www.womhealth.org.au/conditions-and-treatments/418-labiaplasty>