

Labioplasty Information Sheet

Are you thinking about Labioplasty?

If you are considering surgery, we want you to be thoroughly informed about this procedure. Reading this information is the first step. However, a personal consultation with Dr. Peterson is the best way to obtain any additional information you need.

What is Labioplasty?

Cosmetic surgery of the outer genital area and more specifically of the labia is also called labioplasty.

Is Labioplasty for me?

Women are often concerned about the appearance of their genital area. This may be a concern purely for aesthetic reasons or more functional reasons.

The inner labia may actually protrude so far out of the outer labia that it produces functional problems. It may cause chaffing on underwear; it may cause folds which become irritated and painful. Large labia may also be visible through underwear or swim suits, causing embarrassment.

Initial and subsequent consultations

During the initial consultation, you may be asked about your concerns and what you would like to see improved. This will help Dr. Peterson to understand your expectations and determine whether they can be realistically achieved.

You will be asked about your medical history including previous operations, past and present medical conditions and current medications. In order to provide you with the best information and safest options, it is important that you give us complete information. The medical conditions that may increase risks of surgery include high blood pressure, thyroid problems, diabetes and bleeding problems.

Physical examination will be performed, with a female nurse present at all times. The labial anatomy and the extent of the problem will be

assessed and a plan for a possible corrective procedure will be formulated by your surgeon.

Preoperative photographs may be taken during your initial consultation or a subsequent visit with your consent. Dr. Peterson will discuss with you the details of the operation and the possible risks and complications associated with the procedure.

Preparation for Surgery

The goal of Dr Peterson and the staff is to make your surgical experience as easy and comfortable for you as possible.

Smokers must stop smoking 3 weeks before surgery. Aspirin and some anti-inflammatory drugs used for the treatment of arthritis can cause increased bleeding, so you should avoid taking these medications for 2 weeks before surgery.

It is helpful to have the genital area shaven or waxed several days prior to surgery as you will find it easier to look after the stitches after surgery. Apart from a normal diet and hygiene, no special preparation is necessary.

Labioplasty is performed in our office operating room, usually no sedation is required. A local anaesthetic will be used to numb the area. If you prefer to be sedated this is easily arranged.

The operation is performed on a day only surgery basis, meaning you can leave after the operation is finished and you have recovered sufficiently.

The day of Surgery

Dr. Peterson will mark your skin before the operation and take pre surgery photographs. You will then be moved to the operating room and receive your anaesthesia. Even if you are sedated you will also receive a local anaesthesia to the area.

Your Operation

The operation will take around 1 hour, depending on the type and extent of the operation.

The incisions will be places according to the preoperative plan formulated by your surgeon. The

stitches used in the operation are dissolving, so that looking after the operation will be easier. Once the operation itself is finished, antibiotic ointment is applied to the sutures.

After Surgery

When surgery is completed, you will be taken into a recovery area where you will continue to be closely monitored. Generally, you will be ready to leave roughly 1 hour after the operation is finished.

Because the area is infiltrated with long-lasting local anaesthetic, you will have little or no pain after the procedure. As the anaesthetic wears off, some discomfort will return. This can generally be well controlled by taking oral medications such as Tylenol and cold compressors. Only take Tylenol or the pain medication prescribed by Dr. Peterson. Resting also helps decrease the discomfort. The pain will settle over several days to a point where you will be taking only Tylenol by 4th day or so.

Straining, bending and lifting must be avoided, since these activities might cause increased swelling or even bleeding. Although you will find that mobilization is a little slow at first, you should expect to be walking normally within five days after surgery.

It is important that you keep the area clean. Showering or warm sitz baths are helpful in keeping the area clean and reducing discomfort. The antibiotic ointment is to be applied to the suture lines 3-4 times a day to minimize the chance of infection.

How will I look and feel?

You will notice swelling and bruising, which is to be expected. The bruising and much of the swelling will disappear over a period of 2 weeks. However, it may be several months before all swelling subsides and you see the final result of your labioplasty. Incisions will initially be red or pink in colour. They will gradually begin to fade till they are skin coloured or lighter after 6-12 months.

Some numbness around the suture line may persist for months after surgery.

When can I resume my normal activities?

You may be able to return to light work anywhere from one to two days to a week after surgery. In many instances, you can resume most of your normal activities, including some form of mild exercise, after

a few weeks. You may continue to experience some mild, periodic discomfort and swelling during this time, but such feelings are normal. Severe pain should be reported to us immediately. You should avoid sexual activity for a minimum of 2-3 weeks or when Dr. Peterson advises after seeing you postoperatively.

Results of your Surgery

Because of individual factors, not everyone will achieve the same results from labioplasty. Dr Peterson will select the surgical technique that he feels will obtain the best outcome for you. Incision lines will fade over time but will be permanently present. It is important to realise that the amount of time it takes for recovery varies greatly among individuals and also depends on the extent of the operation.

Since the healing process is gradual, you should expect to wait at least several weeks to get an accurate picture of the results of your surgery. This is one of the most highly successful surgeries performed each year and we have only ever had positive patient feedback.

Risks and possible complications of Surgery

Fortunately, significant complications from labioplasty surgery are infrequent. Every year, many operations are performed with no major problems and good results. However, everyone considering surgery should be aware of both the benefits and risks. The subject of risks and potential complications of surgery is best discussed on a personal basis at your appointments.

- Bleeding may occur. At worst, this may require return to the operating room to evacuate the blood clot and or to stop the bleeding.
- There will be bruising after surgery. This usually settles after approximately 2 weeks.
- Because Labioplasty involves incisions in an area which is very rich in nerve endings, a risk exists of painful scars. The pain from surgery may interfere with normal function and may result in painful sexual intercourse.

- Wound infection may complicate the operation in approximately 2% of operations. The infection is usually treated with antibiotics, oral or intravenous, depending on its severity.
- Dehiscence or reopening of the wound may occur in about 1-3 % of operations. This usually happens as a result of infection and is managed by treating the infection.
- Collection of blood or fluid under the operated skin. This usually happens within the first 24 hours after surgery. Rarely, it may require return to the operating room. More commonly, fluid collects under the skin without any obvious ill effects. Removal of this serum is a painless process but may require several visits to the plastic surgeon's office.
- Labioplasty results in scars. They run on the ridge or around the labia. Healing is intrinsically unpredictable and different in different people. Wide, lumpy or irregular scars may occur due after surgery. Revisionary surgery is sometimes helpful in certain instances where incisions may have healed poorly.
- Clots in leg veins may cause leg swelling. The clots may travel to the lungs causing severe breathing difficulty and, rarely, death. With adequate precautions, which are routinely taken, including medications, compression stockings and early mobilisation, these complications are very uncommon.

You can help to minimize certain risks by following the advice and instructions we give you, both before and after your surgery.

Maintaining a relationship with your Plastic Surgeon

Should there be any questions regarding labioplasty; be sure they are answered in advance. Well meaning friends are not a good source of information. Find out everything before proceeding with the operation - a well informed patient is a happy one.

After surgery, you will return to our office for follow-up care at prescribed intervals, at which time your progress can be evaluated. Post-operative photographs will form a part of the evaluation of your result. Once the immediate postoperative follow-up is complete, many surgeons encourage their patients to come back for periodic check-ups to observe and discuss the long-term results of surgery.

Please remember that the relationship with us does not end when you leave the operating room. If you have questions or concerns during your recovery, or need additional information at a later time, you should contact your surgeon.