

## Vagina Dialogue

Sat, 2013-03-16 23:58 -- csb

Esther Loh chats to two Singaporean plastic surgeons about making vaginas prettier and how to rectify vaginal laxity.

After giving birth to several babies naturally, a woman's vagina might become somewhat stretched and lax. While giving birth by Caesarean section can avoid stretching the vagina and thus prevent the problem of vaginal laxity, there are nevertheless many women who have vaginal laxity post-natural childbirth who suffer in silence, afraid to discuss what has, for the most part, been deemed a taboo subject in conservative Asian circles. Yet other women might be unhappy with the way their vagina looks externally. The labia might be too big or shrivelled, for example. If any of this sounds familiar to you, you'll be happy to know that help is at hand.

### Laser Vaginal Rejuvenation



Plastic and reconstructive surgeon Dr. Martin Huang attributes increased demand in vaginal beautification procedures to better informed and empowered women.

To correct vaginal laxity after childbirth and hence improve sexual function, plastic and reconstructive surgeon Dr. Martin Huang recommends laser vaginal rejuvenation. "This procedure also corrects urinary stress incontinence which refers to the uncontrolled leakage of urine under conditions of increased intra-abdominal pressure, for instance, coughing, laughing or sneezing."

The procedure involves tightening the muscles of the front and back walls of the vagina. A small amount of excess lining from the inner lining of the vagina is also removed in the process. A special laser is used to perform the dissection as this results in less bleeding and greater accuracy and safety.

Done under general anaesthesia, this is a day procedure and requires downtime of a week. "The patient will have a gauze pack in her vagina for 24 hours to prevent post-operative bleeding. She will need a urinary catheter for four to five days, until the swelling has subsided. Some aftercare is required to ensure smooth bowel movements and to prevent constipation as straining at bowel movements will create unwanted pressure and tension to the nearby vaginal wounds.

“Normal daily activities are allowed but not exercise for the first month. For it to heal fully, patients should wait six to eight weeks before resuming penetrative sexual intercourse, even though vaginal tightening is immediate,” explains Dr. Huang.

## Designer Laser Vaginoplasty

Designer laser vaginoplasties are about improving the external appearance of the vulva. Some women are unhappy with large or sagging labia minora or wrinkled and shrunken labia majora. “The first condition often occurs with ageing but it can also be a genetically determined condition. Some women develop large labia minora naturally, even at a young age. The second condition is always associated with ageing as there is fat loss from the labia majora,” explains Dr. Huang.

The aim with the designer laser vaginoplasty is to make the vagina appear more youthful and attractive. By using a special laser, the excess tissue is accurately cut so that the labia minora are reduced in size and also made to look more tight, compact and streamlined.

“The procedure can also reduce the clitoral foreskin by cutting away the excess skin surrounding the clitoris. This often corrects the wrinkled and aged appearance of the clitoral area and makes it more youthful. It also allows the clitoris to become more exposed and hence stimulated during sexual activity.”

This procedure is best done under general anaesthesia. Patients must refrain from penetrative sexual intercourse for six to eight weeks and exercise is not allowed for a month after the surgery. It takes about a month to see the final results – after the swelling has subsided.

## Minimally and non-invasive alternatives



Plastic surgeon Dr. Chua Jun Jin says that women want their private parts to be attractive to themselves and their partners.

Plastic surgeon Dr. Chua Jun Jin says that there are also non-invasive methods of making cosmetic improvements to the vaginal area. These alternatives are topical products, lasers and injections of natural fillers, all of which involve little or minimal downtime.

“Topical products which include ingredients such as vitamin C, vitamin A, extracts of fruits and milk are used to reduce pigmentation, wrinkles and roughness. Meanwhile, laser and radiofrequency can also stimulate the deeper layers of the skin, resulting in tighter skin, while removing blemishes and smoothing the skin in this area. This can produce mild swelling and bruising. Results can be seen in three months.

“Fillers such as hyaluronic acid can also restore volume and smoothe out wrinkles in the labia, giving the labia a younger appearance with pumped up flesh. Full results can be seen in 10 days and can last up to two years,” explains Dr. Chua.

Dr. Huang adds that fat injection can also restore volume to the labia. “The fat is harvested from a donor site, usually the abdomen or inner thighs and is then injected to fill the shrunken labia majora. This adds volume that has been lost with age and plumps up the labia, making it more attractive and youthful.”

## Hymenoplasty

A hymenoplasty might be requested by unmarried women who fear that the loss of their virginity prior to marriage might be discovered. According to Dr. Huang, this procedure involves reconstructing the hymen so that it appears similar to its virginal state. It is a far less commonly requested procedure compared to the tightening and beautification discussed earlier. “This involves repairing the various parts of the torn hymen, which are somewhat like the petals of a broken flower, and joining these petals of tissues back to recreate that ‘flower’.” According to Dr. Huang, demand for vagina-related procedures over the past few years has grown due to increased awareness among women regarding the nature and significance of these problems and the availability of solutions. “The ‘problems’ themselves have always existed. But most women have probably been less sensitive to issues such as vaginal laxity affecting sexual function and the external appearance of the vulva in the past. However, the enlightened women of today are now empowered with choices and options to address these issues which they increasingly view as being important to their overall well being.”

Dr. Chua notes that most women who opt for the procedures want their intimates to be more attractive to themselves and to their sexual partners. “Actually, they do not need to have these procedures as there are no major or significant issues if they are left untreated. But these patients simply want to feel better about themselves.”

However, to correct vaginal laxity properly, the loose muscle needs to be tightened in its wall and the only way to do that is through invasive surgery. “Non-surgical laser techniques simply resurface the inner lining of the vagina with the intention of causing shrinkage of the overall calibre of the vaginal canal when the resurfaced area heals. While this may be of some help in very mild conditions, it is unlikely to create sufficient tightening in moderate to severe cases of vaginal laxity,” shares Dr. Huang.

# Tightening Up Loose Ends

Two patients who have had problems with laxity talk to Esther Loh about their experience with non-invasive treatments.



CS&B

## **Amber, 38 years old**

**– shares her experience with Smartxide2 Vulvo-Vaginal Laser Reshaping (V2LR)**

*As a beautician, I need to look my best in order to portray confidence to my clients. Besides my outer appearance, my inner sense of confidence is also important as clients will sense it through my facial expressions and gestures. After giving birth to three children naturally, I felt that there was something lacking in my relationship with my husband. My vulva sagged and my vagina became loose and changed in appearance.*

*A friend recommended a new procedure using the Smartxide2 Vulvo-Vaginal Laser Reshaping, commonly known as V2LR or the Mona Lisa Touch. I gave it a try.*

*I had the first procedure in July last year at Dr. Ko Chung Beng's clinic. I was very nervous at first but the doctor assured me that I wouldn't feel any pain. Numbing cream was applied to the vulva 45 minutes before the laser treatment. The vagina did not require any numbing cream as there was no pain at all. Although it felt a little*

*weird having a probe in my vagina, it was no different than the feeling I get when having a Pap smear. The procedure took about 20 to 30 minutes.*

*Immediately after the procedure, I went shopping as I didn't feel any discomfort, though there was a bit of discharge in the first two hours, which I was told is normal. I was advised to refrain from any sexual intercourse for the first three days.*

*Three days later, the results kicked in and I experienced a tremendous tightening effect in the vagina and the vulva. The skin around the area was also softer and smoother. I was surprised by the results as this procedure does not involve any cutting and stitching. The results got better each time I had the treatment – with more tightening effects. After the second treatment three months later, I could also see a skin lightening effect. My husband certainly noticed an obvious difference during sex and was happy that I did the treatment. The treatment has restored the sensation of my youth and enhances the satisfaction I get during intercourse. Besides that, it increases my confidence as I know I'm looking good inside out.*

#### **What the doctors say:**



Dermatologist Dr. Ko Chung



Aesthetic medical practitioner Dr. Goh Pei Ting.

Aesthetic medical practitioner Dr. Goh Pei Ting, who conducted the treatments on Amber, says, “She showed great tightening results as we needed to use a smaller sized probe during her second treatment. The treatment also lessens the appearance of dark and thick skin in the area due to friction of underwear.”

Dermatologist Dr. Ko Chung Beng adds that the treatment also corrects and improves the vulva and vagina as it stimulates collagen production to form thicker vagina walls and contracts loose skin. “Pre and post menopausal symptoms such as dryness, itchiness and discharge can be addressed as well to bring youthfulness back to this intimate area.”