

Surgery Tightens Vagina, Changes Appearance

Patients Seek Doctors' Help To Enhance Sex Lives

UPDATED: 10:07 am EDT May 5, 2006

NEW YORK -- A new trend in cosmetic surgery offers to some women the opportunity to improve their sex lives or to look better in a place most people find uncomfortable to talk about. A reporter from Baltimore television station WBAL traveled to the Manhattan offices of gynecologist Dr. Ronald Blatt, where some unusual procedures take place.

"By doing vaginoplasty surgery, we tighten the vagina -- increasing the friction, increasing the sensation," Blatt said. The cosmetic surgery procedure is called vaginal rejuvenation -- the most private of makeovers performed nationwide.

Patients Seeking Vaginal Rejuvenation

After having six kids, Kim Hernandez, of Texas, underwent the procedure as an anniversary present for her husband. "You have to do what is right for you. I know this isn't holding my marriage together; this is something added," Hernandez said.

Blatt has performed vaginal rejuvenation for four years, and he got the idea from seeing another doctor's magazine advertisement. "I said, 'I know how to do this. I've done them over the years, not on a regular basis.' I put a small ad in my myself and got a lot of responses, much more than I expected," Blatt said. Blatt's office takes calls from all over the U.S. and the world inquiring about vaginoplasty, as well as a different procedure called labiaplasty.

"Labiaplasty is a reduction or the recontouring of the small lips on the outside of the vagina, called the labia minora," Blatt said. When asked why patients seek the procedure, Blatt explained, "This is done for cosmetic reasons, people don't like the way they look. ... Women report more healthier, happier sex lives, and their husbands notice a big difference, too."

A Woman's Perspective

Not too many blocks away, across the street from the Metropolitan Museum of Art on Fifth Avenue, gynecologist Dr. Lauri Romanzi sees similar patients asking for the same things. At first, Romanzi refused, thinking it was weird and just wrong. "It's very difficult to accept the notion that in the developed Western world, the trend du jour for cosmetic surgery in women is to revise the way the labia or perineum looks," she said. Ultimately, Romanzi said, it seemed smarter to her to do the procedures as someone who understands that part of the body very well. "You need to be careful with sensation in this area," she said.

At first, Romanzi said she was shocked to receive the requests. "When the first woman came in, I looked for piercings, but there were none! She just didn't like the way the labia looked," she said.

While Romanzi performs the surgeries, she uses the cosmetic trend to promote something very healthy: keeping the pelvic muscles in shape. "There's nothing wrong with taking exercises and using it for women who want to make the vagina tighter, their orgasms stronger, and you can do it without surgery," Romanzi said. All kinds of products exist to help accomplish that task. Romanzi uses the equivalent of vaginal weightlifting and biofeedback to help women isolate the right muscles. "You get the 'Aha' phenomenon, when patients suddenly get it and start contracting like an Olympian -- a vaginal Olympian -- this is the ultimate," Romanzi said.

Both doctors said this is not high-risk surgery and that their patients are happy with the results. ■