

women's business

Sydney plastic surgeon **Dr Mark Kohout** explains the labiaplasty procedure.

Labiaplasty is also known as labia reduction, inner lip reduction, labia minora reduction or vaginal rejuvenation. Cosmetic labiaplasty involves surgically reducing and/or reshaping the female external genital structures. Large or asymmetric labia may cause different problems for women. Protruding labia may be uncomfortable, may chaff against underwear or be visible through swimming costumes. More commonly, large labia tend to make some women self-conscious about their appearance, which may impact on their relationships. Here is how one patient explains it:

'My labia would actually protrude. I would stand up and it would pop out and I would want to tuck it back up, but obviously I couldn't if I was in public. When it popped out, it rubbed on my underpants, which felt awful and was so unpleasant. I would complain to my mother about it, but she thought I would 'grow out of it' and that it would shrink in time. But it didn't.

'I had no self-confidence and when I was naked it dangled. My partner would joke about it but luckily, he wasn't really bothered by it at all – it was me that was



bothered. I always made sure there was a lot of 'mood lighting' in the bedroom.'

Labiaplasty is requested by women of all ages and walks of life. Often just feeling good about how you look can build self-confidence and self-esteem. Some patients report improvement in their sex lives as a result of this procedure and the effect it has on their confidence.

'I am so happy now, it's really changed my quality of life. Little things, like wearing a swimming costume, are different for me now. It used to be awful in summer – sometimes you could see through the costume, which was so embarrassing. And to my partner's delight, I was 'out of action' for only three weeks, even though I was told it could be up to six weeks.

'I'm not shy about what I've had done. I talk about it with anyone who wants to know. People are fascinated about exactly what the procedure involves. Women in particular want to know everything about labia surgery because there's still not much information out there and talking to your doctor about it isn't always easy.'

The labiaplasty corrective procedure can be performed in a day surgery and recovery usually takes about two weeks. **acsm**

