

down under

the designer vagina

What in the world could get you to undergo surgery for vaginal rejuvenation?



and hymenoplasty, which sews the hymen back in. I was in awe that these procedures could be done and wanted to do it straightaway. I was especially keen to have hymenoplasty because I wanted to be a virgin again for my husband. We'd gotten married when I was 23 and he wasn't the one I'd lost my virginity to. As I got older, all those religious beliefs of being a virgin for my husband were playing on my mind. I'd always felt guilty that he didn't have the 'gift' of my virginity.

So I rang the doctor who'd been on the show and arranged a free consultation. He suggested I have both the hymenoplasty and the laser vaginal rejuvenation as I'd had three kids. It would tighten the vaginal muscles to give me a lot more sexual pleasure. I was told it would cost between US\$6,000 and \$10,000 (AU\$11,000 to \$18,000). Each woman's labia and clitoris are structured differently, so for some the

Other 'down there' cosmetic surgery procedures

X-TASY Collagen is injected into the G-spot so a woman can achieve a more intense orgasm.

DESIGNER LASER VAGINOPLASTY Fat from your inner thigh is injected into the genital area to give it a youthful look. Women who think their labia are too long or asymmetric have it done.

LASER REDUCTION LABIPLASTY The elongated or unequal labial minora (small inner lips) are sculptured so they doesn't project past

the labia majora (outer lips). Most clients opt for the *Playboy* model's look.

LASER PERINEOPLASTY Rejuvenates the relaxed perineum (the bit between the vagina and the anus).

AUGMENTATION LABIPLASTY Provides a younger-looking labia majora by autologous fat transplant (removal of the patient's fat and placing it into the labia majora).

VULVA LIPOPLASTY Removes unwanted fat from the pubic and upper parts of the labia majora.

No, we're not kidding. In the US, the UK, Canada, Korea and Brazil, tens of thousands of women are paying obscene amounts of money to have their vaginas tightened and their hymens reconstructed. So far the operation isn't available in Australia but it can only be a matter of time. The question is — is there anyone mad enough to do it? We found one American woman who explained why she felt the need to go under the knife.



"I WANTED TO BE A VIRGIN AGAIN"

Rebecca Gonzalez, 33, is an LA restaurant manager.

"Five years ago, I was watching a documentary about two women who'd had laser vaginal rejuvenation (where the vagina is tightened through laser treatment)

procedure takes an hour, but for others up to three hours, depending on how much they want to remove.

My husband was totally against it. He thought I was mad. He said we had a good sex life and didn't see the need for it. So, a few years later when I'd saved up enough money, I asked him again. He begrudgingly agreed to go to the consultation with me.

The doctor put my husband at ease and said I wasn't the only woman who wanted to be a virgin again for her husband; whether for cultural or religious reasons. I didn't tell my friends or family because I wanted it to be between my husband and me. With my Catholic background, I knew

And the case against

● Professor Don Wilson, chairman of the Urogynaecology Subspecialty Committee for the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) says:

"I have serious concerns regarding these operations. In my view, pelvic floor exercises are more effective. I'd only want to operate on the vagina if there was pain or discomfort; certainly not for cosmetic reasons. There are risks with scar tissue, which can cause discomfort in that area. I doubt this will be funded in Australia and New Zealand."

● Dr Bob Montgomery, a clinical psychologist says: "The most important sexual organ is between the ears and if this is well informed, you don't need to do anything to the other organs. I think anyone who has had these operations has been misled by surgeons looking for business. The size of the penis and the vagina makes no difference to sexual satisfaction. To tighten your vagina, I recommend pelvic floor muscle exercises."

my family would say, 'You can't reclaim your virginity! You're crazy!'

I had the operation a few months later. I knew it was going to be pretty painful; the doctor had to cut the top and bottom of the vaginal canal with a laser, then sew the muscles and ligaments back together to reduce the diameter of the vagina and make it tighter. The result was a virginal, pre-childbearing state.

I was under general anaesthetic and didn't feel any pain during the operation. When I woke up I had pain that was similar to when I'd had my first baby. I was sore and had some cramping, but I was also high from all the Valium and painkillers! There were five layers of dissolvable stitches from the laser vaginal rejuvenation and about 15 stitches from the hymenoplasty, but I couldn't feel them.

I was in hospital for six hours before being sent home. I had a catheter for three days and they'd warned me that I'd have some pain and swelling from that, so I was advised to put ice-packs on the vaginal area for up to four days. I also took antibiotics to prevent any infection.

I was told to wait six weeks before having sex, but I waited for eight weeks because I was scared about it hurting. It took four attempts for my husband to fully penetrate me, but after all that pain from the surgery, I love it and think it's wonderful! Since the muscle tissue is tighter, his penis feels bigger, which makes sex amazing. Now I have more orgasms and it feels more sensitive down there.

I would do it all again without hesitation and I especially recommend it to other mothers. After you've had children, sex isn't really the same as your muscle tissue has stretched, making your vagina wider and less sensitive. Now, I'm back to that point before I had children! And I can say I lost my virginity to my husband."

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