

## Labiaplasty

Who does it?

● Plastic Surgeon

AKA

Designer Vagina Surgery, Labial Reduction

What is it?

It might seem extreme to some, but cosmetic surgery of the labia has been on the rise in the UK over the past few years. The procedure is usually aimed at reducing the shape and/or size of the labia, and although it can be done for purely cosmetic reasons, some women find that overly large labia minora (inner labia) can cause pain and irritation.

While it is more common to have the procedure on the inner labia, it can also be performed on the outer labia, although this is not common practice in the UK. Often, women have been unhappy with the size of their labia from puberty, however bulky or distended labia can occur as a result of childbirth or even just the natural ageing process.

Who's suitable?

As this is a surgical procedure, you would need to have a thorough consultation with a plastic surgeon before making a decision.

A big problem is that women don't really know what constitutes 'normal' as far as labia are concerned – we don't tend to see each others' very often! – so your surgeon should be able to tell you whether you are a suitable candidate for the procedure or if, in fact, your labia are not unusually large.



from £2,000  
to £4,000

## Mr Paul Banwell discusses the phenomenon of the 'designer vagina'

I have seen a huge increase in the number of patients seeking labiaplasty in the last few years, which I think is because the media has highlighted the availability of such surgery and girls have suddenly realised that something can be done about such a sensitive problem.

The age of labiaplasty patients varies hugely – from early 20s to women in their 50s – and these women may be from all walks of life.

Labiaplasty can be performed for functional or aesthetic reasons, and in my practice the split is roughly 50:50. The perceived problem may be pre-existing or may occur secondary to childbirth. Just like other parts of the body, labia may come in all shapes and sizes and there is a spectrum of normality. The



good news is that if patients have concerns, surgery may be an appropriate solution.

For those who do wish to go ahead, this is an operation with a very high degree of patient satisfaction – and there are almost always strong feelings of positivity and emotional wellbeing afterwards.

[www.paulebanwell.com](http://www.paulebanwell.com)

For more information turn to Mr Banwell's profile on p xxx

What's the treatment like?

Labiaplasty is usually performed as a day case and can be done using either a local or a general anaesthetic. The surgeon then basically cuts the labia down to the requisite size, using either a scalpel, a laser or specialised scissors, depending on his/her preference.

Using a laser cauterises the blood vessels, minimising the amount of bleeding, so some surgeons prefer that, however opinion is divided and many feel that scissors or a scalpel are more suited to the very small, precise cuts needed in a procedure like labiaplasty. Whatever your surgeon prefers, it shouldn't make much difference to the end result.

If a scalpel or scissors have been used, the incision will be closed using dissolvable stitches. The whole process shouldn't take longer than one or two hours.

What happens afterwards?

If you've had a general anaesthetic, you will need to allow time for the effects to wear off, and you may be quite sore for the next week or two. Usually, you should be able to return to work after about a week, although any vigorous activity – including sexual intercourse – should be avoided for at least four weeks.

Will I have a scar?

There may be some minor scarring, but labial incisions tend to heal well and are rarely noticeable.