



Red M. Alinsod, M.D., FACOG, ACGE

Aesthetic Vaginal Surgery

FAQs

Why choose Dr. Alinsod to do my surgery?

Dr. Alinsod has the distinct advantage and experience as a reconstructive pelvic surgeon enabling him to tackle even the most difficult of cosmetic vaginal/vulvar cases. Unlike a plastic surgeon, who typically has little to no training in the art of reconstructive pelvic surgery, or a general gynecologist, who has little to no training in aesthetic vaginal/vulvar procedures, Dr. Alinsod is able to treat the whole woman in terms of her aesthetic, gynecologic, and urologic health by addressing any incontinence and pelvic prolapse that may be present at the time of the cosmetic procedure. This broad base of knowledge and experience combined with a sharp focus on aesthetics makes Dr. Alinsod the surgeon of choice. Dr. Alinsod has trained hundreds of surgeons in the art and science of Aesthetic Vaginal Surgery. He is the National Instructor in Aesthetic Vaginal Surgery for The American Academy of Cosmetic Gynecologists and gives talks, seminars, and workshops in this rapidly evolving subspecialty.

What is Aesthetic Vaginal Surgery (AVS)?

The term Aesthetic Vaginal Surgery is also known by other names such as Vaginal Rejuvenation, Laser Vaginal Rejuvenation, Labiaplasty, Vaginoplasty, Designer Laser Vaginoplasty, Perineoplasty, and Hymenoplasty. Aesthetic Vaginal Surgery is a broad term that includes the individual procedures. Since it is a rather new field dealing with the appearance and function of a woman's private parts the terminology has not been standardized. In simple terms, Aesthetic Vaginal Surgery and its many names deal with cosmetic surgery of the vulvar and vaginal region. It is cosmetic surgery of the "Private Parts."

What causes labias to be so enlarged or asymmetric?

Genetics plays a key role and is probably the major determinant in how large and what shape your labia will be. Exposure to estrogen or testosterone can also be

a significant factor. Don't forget that physical trauma (e.g. labial tear from childbirth or bicycle injury) occasionally plays a role in the appearance of the labia.

What causes vaginal to be so cavernous at times?

The most likely culprit is childbirth. The passage of an average seven pound baby causes a great deal of muscle and tissue stretching that does not go back to its original tautness. Furthermore, vaginal lacerations, episiotomies, tears of the perineum and widen the vaginal opening and deeper canal even more. Other rare causes of vaginal laxity include a genetic predisposition to stretchy skin such as Marfan's Syndrome. Excess weight, chronic cough, chronic bronchitis can weaken the vaginal tissues and cause a downward and outward travel of the vaginal tissues.

Why is vaginal correction important?

Surgery to improve the appearance and function of a woman's vaginal tissues is important for both personal esteem and physiologic function. Childbirth is often traumatic resulting in lacerations and healing process that is not personally satisfying. The use of forceps or vacuum assisted delivery and the increasing weight of babies today result in more prolapses of pelvic organs, more incontinence, and more looseness of vaginal tissues or unappealing appearance of labial tissue. Many who have finished their childbearing years are now concerned about their personal appearance and are looking for ways to deal with this problem. Some feel that they have lost a great deal of sexual sensation due to "looseness" of the vagina. Vaginoplasty can increase friction during intercourse and can enhance intimacy.

Who does Aesthetic Vaginal Surgery?

Gynecologists, urogynecologists, and a few plastic surgeons do most of these types of surgeries. Gynecologists are trained specifically in repair of fallen bladders and rectums, fallen uterus or vagina, and repairing tears in the vaginal region as part of their everyday work. Urogynecologists usually are highly subspecialized and focus primarily on the worst incontinence and pelvic organ prolapses encountered. Plastic surgeons are generally trained in cosmetic surgery on men and women and very few are trained in vaginal surgery. Some plastic surgeons are highly trained in totally reconstructing new vaginas in transsexuals, transvestites, and pelvic cancer patients. With experience and training all specialties mentioned above can perform aesthetic vaginal surgery.

Is the use of Lasers important?

The laser is an important surgical tool that has many advantages. Certain lasers are very precise and are used as scalpels. Some lasers are ablative (destructive) and used more to destroy abnormal tissue or to resurface the skin. Many dermatologist and plastic surgeons use this type of laser. However, there is no magic in the use of lasers. In fact, other modalities such as radiofrequency cautery units can give more precise cuts and less tissue destruction by a factor of ten or more. Other surgeons will avoid electrical units altogether and use highly

precise scissors or scalpel units. Another way to look at lasers is to realize that it is a tool in the doctor's bag but that it is not ultimately any better than a cold knife. However, it is undeniable that using the term "laser" adds glamour and a sense of prestige to a procedure.

What is the procedure like?

Almost all of the cosmetic surgeries are outpatient. Labiaplasty and vaginoplasty cases are typically finished within an hour. If a repair of the bladder, rectum or bowel is needed then a 23 hour overnight stay may be needed. If a hysterectomy is needed then it is typical to stay one to two days. Placement of a sling to help with incontinence does not prolong the hospital stay. Many patients feel the pain involved is similar to the discomfort AFTER a baby has been born. They are somewhat sore but not in agony. Pain control is excellent in the large majority of cases.

What and how are the actual procedures done?

Labiaplasty is the cosmetic reshaping of the inner folds of tissue, called the labia minora, or smaller inner lips of the vagina. Various instruments are used such as pinpoint cautery, Yag lasers, fine scissors, or a knife. The edges are then sewn together with delicate absorbable sutures. A vaginoplasty (commonly referred to as vaginal rejuvenation) is when a diamond shaped section of tissue is excised from the inside of the vagina and brought down to the outside of the vagina. Often times a small triangular area is also excised from the perineum (the area right below the vaginal opening). This is called a perineoplasty or perineorrhaphy. The size of the tissues removed rarely are larger than a domino block. If needed, sutures that bundle loose muscles together are used to narrow the vaginal opening. At the very end of the procedure, a CO2 laser may be used to smooth out any skin irregularities and further tighten the vaginal opening. The laser provides for growth of new, softer, smoother, and tighter skin just as it would when used on a face.

What does surgery actually do to me physically?

Surgery can trim excessively large labia minora, it can also reduce a labia majora. We can also trim the excess bulge of skin in the vagina and tighten the entrance to the vagina. We can make the whole vagina tighter by excising this loose vaginal skin and reapproximating the stretched tissues from vaginal births. Surgery alone will not improve the tone of your vaginal muscles. You need pelvic floor exercising for that similar to Kegel's exercises. Surgery can also add support to your fallen bladder, rectum, bowel, or vagina. We often use a mesh made of polypropylene, or skin tissue from a donor, or tissue from a pig or cow to act like a patch for the herniation of organs into and out of the vagina. This is a highly specialized skill very few surgeons perform. Again, in some instances lasers are used to smoothen out wrinkled vaginal skin to make it new and young looking again. Many women tell us that they are happy to be able to wear jeans, bathing suits, and form-fitting outfits again because the rubbing and irritation

have disappeared. Women can also regain the confidence in appearance that enable them to wear leotards, bikinis, and tighter clothing.

Where is the procedure done?

The procedure is usually done in the operating room or surgery center. If a simple labiaplasty or vaginoplasty is performed then the option of performing the surgery in the office under local anesthesia and oral and injectable medication can be considered. We tailor the surgery to the patient's projected pain tolerance, anxiety level, and health status.

What type of anesthesia is used?

You can have a short nap or be fully awake. General anesthesia is the most common anesthetic used because of the patient's desire not to know or feel anything. Then there is the spinal or epidural anesthetic that allows you to be awake. This is ideal for those who have a fear of going to sleep or have other major medical problems. Sedation and use of local anesthetics is the least invasive of anesthetic options. Many choose this so that recovery is almost immediate and the down time is minimal. If the case involves bladder, rectum, or bowel repair or if a hysterectomy is performed then general anesthesia is the standard.

What are the logistics involved?

A patient interested in aesthetic vaginal surgery usually calls or emails us to set up an initial appointment for evaluation. If at the time of evaluation the patient and physician agree that surgery is the correct choice then a surgical date is finalized. If the individual is an established patient then I will usually see her within a week of surgery to perform a pre-op evaluation. They may also have this pre-op evaluation with their primary care physician for surgical clearance. This is where blood work, X-rays, EKGs are done if needed. The majority of the time a simple blood count is all that is needed.

For women who are from outside the area and choose to fly in, we recommend using John Wayne International Airport. It is about 30 minutes away from beautiful Laguna Beach where our office is located. One trip to Southern California is all that is needed. We can arrange the initial examination to be the day before planned surgery, do the surgery the next day, and go home the day after in most cases. We want to evaluate your tolerance and response to surgery before you fly off for home.

What are the advantages of having surgery in Laguna Beach?

We have some of the finest resort lodging available in California. The Ritz Carlton, St. Regis, and Montage Resorts are within minutes of our office. You can choose to have your recovery at one of these world-class resorts with a home health nurse visiting you or even staying in an adjoining room for total care. Of course you can also stay in the hospital for about the same room rates as

these hotels. Believe or not, the views from the hospital rooms compete very well with the resorts!

What are the advantages of having surgery by Dr. Alinsod?

Dr. Alinsod has performed beautiful aesthetic vaginal surgery for thousands of women over the past 15 years. He has concentrated his skills in the art of aesthetically pleasing vaginal repairs and has taught hundreds of gynecologists, urogynecologist, and urologists. Fellow physicians, physician wives, nurses, operating room technicians have sought out Dr. Alinsod to perform their surgeries. Furthermore, Dr. Alinsod is always in the forefront of his field and travels extensively to meet and discuss with other prominent surgeons what is new and better for the patient. Dr. Alinsod truly cares for his patients and it is this commitment to service that drives his entire team.

How do I get a consultation scheduled?

Call us at 877-4-UROGYN or 949-499-5311. You can also email us at info@urogyn.org. We have office hours to meet your needs ranging from early 6 AM appointments to late 5 PM appointments.

I live far away. Can I get an Internet consultation?

Yes. For the price of a co-pay, you can have Dr. Alinsod respond to your questions in a personal and secure manner via his On-Line Consultations at www.urogyn.org. He answers his emails usually on the same day. You can also send unsecured email for general questions that are not patient specific. We do this to protect an individual's privacy.

What are the risks of surgery?

Anesthesia is a risk factor because of the very rare possibility of a reaction to either the injected medication or inhaled agents. High temperatures and fevers from "Malignant Hypertension" can occur. I have personally never seen this in 19 years of clinical practice. You can also aspirate food or fluid that can obstruct your breathing tube or even cause a pneumonia. There is risk of infection of the surgical site, there is a possibility of bleeding and hemorrhage and a need to have a transfusion. With transfusions there is risk of HIV, Hepatitis, and perhaps other unknown viruses. There is even the risk of death. If tissue or mesh augmentation is needed then there is the risk of rejection of these grafts. Again, these complications are exceptionally rare and the huge majority of cases go quite smoothly. A risk you should also consider is one similar to "buyer's remorse" when one is not fully happy with the result of surgery. Perfect symmetry is impossible to achieve and the exact look you want may be unattainable. The risk of having the surgery redone or amended is present but fortunately is very rare. We will fully review the risks of surgery before the case is even scheduled and give you every opportunity to have your questions answered.

What restrictions do I have after surgery?

We advise "Pelvic Rest" for six to eight weeks. This means nothing goes inside the vagina, such as tampons or vibrators, and no sexual intercourse for the length of time. The only thing allowed in the vagina is the applicator full of estrogen cream we give you to aid in the healing process. We also recommend loose clothing and no tight underwear, thongs, or jeans that may cause rubbing and discomfort. We advise against lifting of objects or activities that can cause you to strain or bear down. We do not want tension on our suture line nor do we want to stretch tissues we have just tightened. Basically, treat yourself like a princess during this healing phase.

How soon can I go back to work?

If you had a labiaplasty or vaginoplasty you can return to work or normal activity within 4 days. If you had both a labiaplasty and vaginoplasty then it may take you a whole week before you feel comfortable to go back to work. Much depends on the type of work you do. For example, a woman who has a desk job will return to work sooner than one who has to walk or run and carry objects from place to place. We will need to individualize your return to work date. In any event, you are usually healed by six weeks although complete healing takes up to three months.

When can I resume sexual activities after surgery?

We recommend that you wait at least six weeks before resuming sexual intercourse. If you had a vaginoplasty it is also recommended that some softening exercises of the surgical site start at six weeks to soften any scarring that may occur and to make the sexual experience more comfortable after surgery. Softening exercises take two to four weeks. This stretching exercise is not needed if you had a labiaplasty alone.

Can you talk about how surgery will affect my sex life?

There are many sites on the Internet that address the topic of sexual gratification and surgeries that may enhance this experience. In summary, there is an opinion that aging and the trauma of childbirth results in looseness of vaginal tissue, weakening of vaginal muscles, and resultant decrease in friction, hence, decreased sexual gratification for both men and women. Unfortunately, this topic is much more complex than simply tightening a vagina to increase frictional forces for both sexes. Surgery can indeed result in tightening of the vagina but there is no guarantee that your sex life will be better or that your orgasms will be more pronounced. You must weigh carefully the claims of an improved sexual experience. Sexual response is multifactorial and it is often the case that a person's personal relationship with his or her partner is the primary determining factor in the happiness of an intimate relationship. Surgery is no panacea but it certainly can improve appearances and increase friction involved. A positive body image is priceless. One more thing, surgery does not affect a woman's ability to become aroused or her ability to become moist prior to having intercourse.

Will my partner feel any changes when we have sex?

If you had a labiaplasty there will probably be a dramatic decrease in the interference of tissue that will be felt by both you and your partner. The same goes for vaginoplasty or vaginal rejuvenation since frictional forces are increased. You may need to perform some stretching exercises of your vagina after surgery to allow comfortable intercourse. This is even more important if your partner is large in size.

Can I combine the vaginal surgeries with other surgeries?

Yes. We do "North-South Face Lifts" quite often. We have an excellent and highly respected Aesthetic Plastic Surgeon, Dr. Dan Mills, who is able to perform anything from liposuction, tummy tucks, to breast implants or facial reconstruction. He welcomes your inquiries. Please visit his website at www.danmillsmd.com or call him at 949-499-2800.

Other well respected plastic surgeons Dr. Alinsod works with include Daniel Kim, M.D. (http://www.psaoc.com/dr_kim.cfm), Robert Kachenmeister, M.D. (http://www.psaoc.com/dr_kachenmeister.cfm), and Sanjay Grover, M.D. (<http://www.drgrover.com/index.htm>)

What other services are offered in Dr. Alinsod's practice?

The Women's Health Center specializes in total care for women. It is more than a Med Spa, more than a plain Laser Center. It is more than a cosmetic dermatology practice and more than a plastic surgery laser service. Nowhere else can you come in for your annual physical examination, Pap smear, mammogram, birth control, hormone check, vaginal rejuvenation, Botox/Fillers, and total laser skin care. Availability to you 24 hour a day, 7 days a week, by phone and by email, at your fingertips, direct to a doctor, to provide answers to your questions and care for your feminine needs. We are the new models for Women's Healthcare Services.

The Laguna Laser Center is available to you now. It provides a broad array of light based therapies to improve the look, feel, and touch of your skin. The safest, most comfortable lasers and Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) systems on the market are up and running and giving amazing results. The newest Palomar Starlux system, the most powerful of all aesthetic laser/IPL machines available, has become the standard by which all others compare to. With the addition of Southern Orange County's top medical aesthetician and Clinical Nutritionist to our team you now have choices and solutions in total aesthetic skin care. Whether it is an intensive six-month series of skin therapies or a single lunchtime peel the Laguna Laser Center will be here for you at your convenience. Dr. Alinsod and South Coast Urogynecology will continue to bring integrated and comprehensive services to Orange County. From annual exams and bio-identical hormones, to complex gynecologic problems, from skin rejuvenation to vaginal rejuvenation, you are covered.

Does insurance cover the surgeries?

Aesthetic Vaginal Surgery is not covered by most health plans since it is cosmetic in nature. However, if you have a fallen bladder, fallen rectum, fallen vagina or uterus, or incontinence, then those surgeries are generally covered if you are symptomatic enough to desire surgery.

How much does it cost for an initial consultation?

The initial consultation is \$250 and can be deducted from the cost of surgery. During this initial consultation we will discuss the risks/benefits/options of surgery, do a private examination, discuss costs, and give you every chance to ask questions that are vital to you. On-Line Consultation is also available at a very modest cost of a co-pay. Find this link at the left hand side of the web page or at the top of the Aesthetic Vaginal Surgery site. I personally answer the emails with the goal of a 24 to 28 hour turnaround.

How much does surgery itself cost?

Labiaplasty is approximately \$6,510. Vaginoplasty is approximately \$7,150. Combination of labiaplasty and vaginoplasty is approximately \$12,150. Laser resurfacing is \$1,600. Perineoplasty is \$4,000. Repair of a fallen bladder/rectum/vagina/or uterus is usually covered by your insurance. Incontinence surgery is also covered by your insurance. The prices quoted do not include anesthesia or facility fees nor do they include the hotel costs. We are able to do labiaplasty in our office under local anesthesia and the facility fee is very low. This can save you a great deal of money. We also offer a 5% discount for cash and check payments. Our billing service charges us 5% so we are able to pass this savings on to you since we would not need their services.

Labia Majoraplasty: \$6150.00

Labia Minoraplasty: \$6150.00

Clitoral Hood Reduction: \$1850.00

Vaginoplasty: \$7150.00

Perineoplasty: \$4150.00

Labiaplasty/Vaginoplasty: \$12,150.00

Labiaplasty/Vaginoplasty/Perineoplasty: \$15,150.00

Labia Minora/Labia Majora: \$11,150.00

Hymenoplasty: \$5000.00

I cannot afford this right now. Do you have financing?

Yes we do. We have very competitive rates provided by CosmeticSurgeryFinancing.com, Care Credit, MedProva, and Capital One's Cosmetic Fee. You can even apply online. On special occasions, such as training days for surgeons, Dr. Alinsod is able to give a discount on surgery costs if you are willing to participate in his teaching programs.