



Just for women: Get back that loving feeling

By SUSAN COLE

When women ask me about this procedure, I tell them it is just for them. They get to decide what results they want to achieve – when they were virgins, after their first baby, after their last? It's up to them to decide. And, I tell it's not for their new boyfriends, not for their second husbands. It must be something the woman wants to do," says Dr. Edward Jacobson, one of the only specialists in laser vaginal surgery in the nation.

When we met at the Laser Vaginal Rejuvenation Institute, across the street from Greenwich Hospital, it was clear that this straightforward obstetrician who still delivers babies on occasion, is more interested in patient care than palatial surroundings. When young women come to him inquiring about on-demand cesarean, he asks them about their fears and helps them understand the risks.

But today, delivering babies is a small part of his practice. Instead, he is offering women a new procedure that gives them back the sensations of their youth when the slightest touch excited everything from the top of the head to the tip of the toes. With age, and sometimes with children, women may lose that loving feeling – not because they are indifferent to their husband or boyfriend, but because their pelvic floor has sagged, lessening sexual satisfaction.

This loss of tone can be the result of pregnancy, childbirth, episiotomy, weight gain or just plain gravity. Women who have not had children also experience this loosening of the muscles that hold the structures that are responsible for sensation.

VAGINAL LASER SURGERY

For Dr. Jacobson, interest in a new procedure to solve this problem came about serendipitously. He performed a traditional surgical procedure for a woman who developed incontinence as a result of a distended bladder.

Several weeks after the surgery, her husband wrote a letter of appreciation to the doctor. It was as if they were dating again, glowed the doctor as he recounted the couple's experience. A short time later, her girlfriend came in asking for the same surgery because she too, wanted to turn back the clock on her sex life.

From there, Dr. Jacobson studied at the Vaginal Laser Rejuvenation



I tell women reproductive cosmetic procedures are not for their new boyfriends or their second husbands

Institute in California where he traded in a scalpel for a high tech precision laser that cardiologists also used for heart surgery.

Now, for the price of a breast augmentation or facelift, about \$6,000 to \$8,000 depending on the structures involved, women put tone back.

Recovery time is about six weeks. Depending on how active a woman is, she may be able to drive and return to work in a week or so. Intercourse must be put off for six weeks. But, adds Dr. Jacobson, that does not mean abstaining for kissing, or sensual touch.

But, Dr. Jacobson cautions, this procedure is not able to rectify emotional or psychological issues. It does not end inhibitions and it does not repair bad relationships – all softer causes of lack of sexual interest or satisfaction. In fact, he does not believe women who trace their lack of

satisfaction to marital discord or personal uneasiness with sex make good candidates for the procedure.

COSMETIC PROCEDURES

Vaginal laser surgery is not the only thing women are seeking when it comes to reproductive cosmetic procedures. The combination of the book *Our Bodies, Ourselves* and the play, *The Vagina Monologues*, has probably done more than anything else to encourage women to examine their external reproductive organs.

As a result, some women come to the Greenwich practice seeking to alter the shape or position of the vulvar structures – the mons, the labia, perineum, introitus and even the clitoris. Dr. Jacobson notes that surgery involving the clitoris is designed to change its appearance, not its function.

RETURNING VIRGINITY

For active young women, primarily from India and Southeast Asia, reproductive cosmetic surgery entails a hymenectomy – reattaching the veil of skin that is often damaged during a woman's first intimate relationship.

Not only do college coeds and grad students seek this procedure, so do older women who may have been widowed or divorced and now want a traditional marriage. Many traditional cultures demand that brides be virgins and this procedure eliminates any evidence to the contrary.

In fact, Dr. Jacobson notes that it is not uncommon for these young women to undergo a gynecological examination when they return to the homeland to be sure the hymen is intact.

This surgery costs far less than the vaginal laser surgery and very little time to recuperate.

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