

## **The Procedure**

Hello and welcome to this blog post about my experience getting a labiaplasty at Diehl Plastic Surgery! As a medical student I have observed and assisted with a multitude of procedures including labiaplasties and have learned the ins and outs, however the labiaplasty was always the most interesting to me. A labiaplasty is a procedure performed under a local anesthetic in which the size of the labia minora, the inner flaps of skin around the vulva, are reduced. The labiaplasty procedure was fascinating to me because I had never heard of the procedure before my time shadowing at Diehl Plastic Surgery. Originally, I thought that it would be damaging to vital genital nerves, be an extremely painful procedure with a gnarly recovery period and be risky in general due to the vascularity and nerve bundles populating the area. However, after looking at before and after photos of patients who had received a labiaplasty with Dr. Diehl and shadowing Dr. Diehl in a few labiaplasty procedures I was very interested in getting one myself. My primary reason for wanting a reduction in the size of my labia minora is because I am a gym fanatic and am always wearing tight athleisure outfits that include leggings and biker shorts. Due to my love of wearing leggings often and my personal female anatomy I have been a victim of the camel toe—in addition to it being embarrassing, it also causes chafing and pain. I told Dr. Diehl about my concerns, and we scheduled a proper consultation to talk more about what my expectations were and what my outcome would be. The consultation process was very simple and stress free. I talked more with Dr. Diehl again about my concerns and desired outcome of having the surgery. We then went onto the physical exam where I was given a gown and undressed waist down. Dr. Diehl returned into the exam room with her medical assistant, I laid butterfly legged in the exam chair and was given a mirror to look at the markings that Dr. Diehl was making on my labia minora to show me an expected result. The markings showed where she would be excising the excess tissue and explained the reason, she arcs down from the clitoral hood to make it look as natural as possible. This was a nice way for us to be on the same page with what I could expect with this surgery.

## **Procedure Day and Experience**

I was so excited about my procedure and the change it was going to have on my life that I could not sleep the night before I was scheduled for surgery. I woke up a little nervous, but I had so much faith in Dr. Diehl that it quickly subsided. I opted to take an MKO tablet, a drug offered at Diehl Plastic Surgery for local procedures. My mom had to drive me to the office because with taking the offered medication to ease my anxiety I would not be able to drive the rest of the day. Upon my arrival Dr. Diehl's primary medical assistant who assists in all the procedures got me ready for my procedure by helping me change into a hospital gown. There was a private bathroom in the operating room where I was able to leave my clothes and belongings during the procedure. Before the procedure began and I took the medication Dr. Diehl came back and did the same process as in the consultation by marking what she would be able to remove with the surgery to confirm that this was what I wanted and expected as a result. Five minutes after taking the MKO tablet I started experiencing the effects that the drug is supposed to yield. As a result of the MKO tablet, the procedure went by really quickly, painlessly and felt like a weird dream. The procedure was completely painless—I did not feel when Dr. Diehl injected my labia with lidocaine to numb it partially due to the MKO tablet but also because she first applied a topical numbing cream to the area. Before I knew it, my procedure was over, and I got sent home with some ice packs for the area.

## **After the Procedure**

The MKO wore off slowly in the car and I just felt sleepy and still felt no pain. I had the urge to stop by Starbucks and get a pumpkin spice latte and was able to take a selfie to send to my friends. I remember enjoying my latte in the car and despite it having caffeine I almost immediately fell asleep when I got home and slept for three hours. After my first nap I woke up, drank some water, took some Tylenol and went back to sleep for a few more hours. My dad woke me up to eat dinner and I had no pain. I was very tired and went back to sleep early and slept well through the night.

## **Days 1 and 2**

The next morning, I awoke to a dull pain in the treatment area. However, I quickly realized that the pain was very easily controlled by sticking to the pain medication schedule that one of Dr. Diehl's PAs have put together for post operative pain scales and when to take which type of medication. This was provided and explained to me at the pre-operative appointment. I was told to stay on top of the Tylenol and setting alarms to make sure I stayed ahead of the pain instead of chasing it, and was also prescribed Tramadol, a non-narcotic prescription painkiller that utilizes synthetic opioids, for break-through pain. I only took the Tramadol at night on nights 1 and 2 to help me get to sleep and sleep painlessly. In addition to sticking to the pain medication schedule, I found that resting with a bag of ice between my legs with my butt on a pillow (that allows for pelvic elevation) was the best way to control the pain as well as wearing very baggy pants/shorts and "granny-panty" style underwear. While doing all of these three things combined, I felt almost no pain by Day 2.

#### **Day 7**

Today I felt almost completely normal! I could sit normally, wear normal fitting clothes/underwear and resume most of my usual day-to-day activities. Something to note was that I still felt uncomfortable wearing extremely tight pants like leggings or biker shorts due to the crotch seams rubbing against the treatment area, however looser fitting jogger-style athletic pants and running shorts were comfortable substitutes. I was able to go to work and focus without any problems. Another thing to note was the area was still sensitive to the touch and that if I touched the area too harshly while washing it, it would cause a little bit of pain that was easily fixed with Tylenol.

#### **Day 14**

At this point I felt almost completely healed. I was back to wearing anything I wanted but I would still not have been comfortable with vigorous exercise or intercourse at this point. I was able to walk my dogs and engage in other forms of light exercise without pain. I could still feel the stitches in the most distal part of the treatment area (the end of the labia most towards the floor when I stand) therefore they were not dissolved but a new layer of skin had filled in where the stitches were made on each labia.

#### **Day 20**

I mistook this day for being a month out from my surgery at one point because I felt so normal. Everything was better than the week prior and the end of one of the stitches on one of the labia had fallen off in the shower. This told me the stitches inside my labia were dissolved and the area was healing as it should.

#### **Day 31**

This week I finally tried working out and horseback riding—both of which were successful. I am now completely healed and more comfortable than I was before the surgery. I have tried on most of my leggings, swimsuit bottoms and other previously questionable clothing items I was afraid to wear before the surgery due to how they gave me camel toe and I have found that I don't get camel toe anymore in ANY of the items! Camel toe used to be a huge deterrent from wearing the clothes I loved, that suited my style, along with my lifestyle and daily activities—but now I don't have to worry about it and that takes a huge weight off my shoulders. Even though the results of this procedure aren't obviously visible to other people and most people wouldn't think it could increase one's confidence, it truly does. The results of this procedure have replaced constant fear of embarrassment, apprehension, discomfort, and with feeling more comfortable in my own skin! Not to mention complete fashion freedom! Thank you, Dr. Diehl and the rest of the team, at Diehl Plastic Surgery!