

# Labia Minora Hypertrophy

Labia minora hypertrophy is when the inner lips (labia minora) of the vulva stick out beyond the outer lips (labia majora).

The vulva is the outside part of a female's genitals. The labia minora are the "inner lips" of the vulva. These inner lips have a lot of nerves and influence the sensation during sexual activity. When the labia minora stick out much farther than, or are disproportionately larger than, the "outer lips," or labia majora it is called labia minora hypertrophy. Every girl and woman has labia minora of a unique size and shape. There are no "normal" measurements for the size of the labia minora, because lots of different sizes can be normal.

Below left is an example of labia minora hypertrophy. You can see how the inner labia stick out much farther than the outer labia.

## What causes labia minora hypertrophy?

Labia minora hypertrophy is usually normal growth. The width and length of the labia minora are different for each woman. Just like some women have smaller or larger breasts, some women have smaller or larger labia minora. There is a very large range of what is normal and healthy for the size and shape of the labia

## Does it cause any problems?

The size of the labia can be a problem for some people. Just as smaller or larger breasts can cause problems (like how large breasts may cause back pain, or make a woman feel self-conscious), the size of the labia can cause physical or emotional problems. Most girls and women have no problems at all.

Problems that some girls or women have include:

- Irritation
- Infection
- Trouble cleaning the labia well
- Pain with activities and sports

Some girls and women also say they feel embarrassed that there is a "bulge" in their underpants. Some feel that they need to "fold up" labia and push them into the vagina so they do not stick out. These concerns about how the labia minora look may cause distress.

As you grow and develop, the appearance of your vulva may change and you may feel more comfortable with how your body looks.

## How can it be treated?

If your labia are not bothering you, you don't need to do anything. Some find it more comfortable to wear 100% cotton underwear or use ointments, like coconut oil or A and D ointment to help decrease rubbing of the labia.

If there is still pain from the labia, sometimes we consider surgery to make the labia minora smaller. This is called labioplasty. After the surgery, the labia usually take 1 to 2 months to fully heal.



Labia minora hypertrophy

### To Learn More

- Adolescent Medicine  
206-987-2028
- Ask your child's  
healthcare provider
- [www.seattlechildrens.org](http://www.seattlechildrens.org)

### Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask  
your child's nurse.
- From outside the  
hospital, call the  
toll-free Family  
Interpreting Line  
1-866-583-1527. Tell  
the interpreter the  
name or extension you  
need.

### Risks

Any surgery has risks. This surgery includes risks of bleeding and infection. It might cause scarring or chronic pain. Talk to your provider if you have other questions about risks.

### If I have surgery, what can I expect?

The way the labia minora look after surgery is different for each person. We recommend waiting until you are through puberty for surgery, unless someone is having a lot of symptoms.

Steps to follow after surgery:

- Relax and rest for 1 to 2 days after surgery. Avoid walking a lot, sitting for a long time, or doing any activity you do not have to do.
- Wear cotton underpants. Avoid any underpants or pants that are tight or uncomfortable.
- Avoid exercise for 2 weeks (no running, heavy lifting, straining, etc.). Avoid activities that involve straddling, like bicycling or horseback riding, for at least 4 weeks.
- Avoid any sexual activity for 4 weeks.
- It is OK to shower 1 day after the procedure. Pat the labia dry gently, do not rub.
- Avoid taking baths or swimming for 2 weeks.
- Stitches will dissolve. They do not need to be taken out.
- You will have a follow-up appointment 2 weeks after surgery to make sure you are healing well.

### Will insurance pay for surgery?

Insurance may cover this surgery when the labia minora measure longer than 5 centimeters and if you are having a lot of pain or skin irritation. You can call your insurance company to ask about coverage.