

Insider Tip

# The Trending Procedure Everyone Is Suddenly Talking About

Tatiana Bido , Special Projects Editor | June 14, 2016



Remember when talking about cosmetic procedures used to be taboo? Long before we became a nation obsessed with Botox and butt lifts, we were a little more discreet about any work we had done to our bodies. We are way past that now and may have even reached the final frontier of prudence, the vagina. With the arrival of more nonsurgical options that are safer and offer less downtime, vaginal rejuvenation is having its day in the sun.

Turn on your favorite reality show and there's probably a Real Housewife or Kardashian talking about the latest procedures that tighten your vajajay in a quick, pain-free visit. On a recent episode of the *Real Housewives of New York City*, cast member Sonja Morgan was filmed having a vaginal rejuvenation procedure on camera. Another sign that we've reached full trend status is when places like New York's Vspot Medspa start popping up. The aptly named medi-spa caters exclusively to vaginal rejuvenation and promises a quick stop-in service designed to make you feel like you're just going in for a wax. So now that we're all more comfortable talking about it, here's what you need to know about the latest in vaginal rejuvenation.

## **It's Not Just About Looks**

Whenever anyone talks about vaginal cosmetic procedures, the first thing that comes to mind is improving the appearance of the labia. But vaginal rejuvenation is not just about looks; it has a very real medical purpose that goes beyond aesthetics. "The term vaginal rejuvenation encompasses both surgical and nonsurgical treatment to improve the appearance and function of the vagina," says Duxbury, MA, plastic surgeon Christine Hamori, MD. "Surgical results of tightening the vaginal muscles can last for a long time, but the procedure is not without risks. Noninvasive treatments carry less risks and can improve vaginal tone, help with lubrication and reduce urinary incontinence."

In addition to the physical benefits, vaginal rejuvenation can improve the lives of women who suffer in silence from embarrassing and stress-inducing issues and disorders like pelvic relaxation, vaginal prolapse, urinary incontinence, endometriosis and a low libido. "There are also emotional benefits to correction when either the appearance of the anatomy or the dysfunction is socially inhibiting and causes anxiety," says Raleigh, NC, plastic surgeon Cynthia Diehl, MD. "We've all seen or maybe even been the lady at the grocery store who had to pause and cross her legs before sneezing. These procedures can be incredibly liberating."

## **These New Devices Are All the Rage**

Today, we have more nonsurgical options available than just kegel exercises. Previously, vaginoplasty or labiaplasty were the only vaginal rejuvenation options available, and while results are long-lasting, both can be painful and require long recovery times. Currently, four state-of-the-art devices released in the last few years are the most popular nonsurgical feminine rejuvenation devices popping up in doctor's offices and medi-spas across the country. "The latest noninvasive procedures are ThermiVa, which uses radio frequency, and fractional CO2 and erbium lasers like Femilift, MonaLisa Touch and IntimaLase," says Dr. Hamori. These devices transmit energy to penetrate deeply into the vaginal tissue to stimulate new collagen growth and improve blood flow, leading to reduced urinary leakage and increased sexual satisfaction.

These noninvasive solutions are currently being offered across medical specialties and can be performed by experienced, board-certified plastic surgeons, gynecologists and dermatologists. Dr. Diehl says the procedure is gentle, painless and fast. "The treatment consists of inserting a small probe (about pinky size) that gently heats the internal tissue to a very specific therapeutic temperature. There is a thermal probe indicator that keeps close track of the actual temperature and the therapeutic goal. That same probe is then gently passed along the outside to tighten the external tissue also."

## **Is It Worth It?**

The treatment can take anywhere from 30–45 minutes and costs range from \$800–\$1500 per session. According to Seattle dermatologist Paula Zook, MD, the introduction of noninvasive, effective and affordable procedures has allowed her patients to address issues like incontinence and vaginal laxity in a comfortable and discreet manner with rapid results. "We recommend a series of three ThermiVa treatments approximately 30 days apart and a single yearly 'touch up' to maintain results," says Dr. Zook. "Most patients notice results immediately after the first treatment, but maximum improvement is experienced a few weeks after the series of treatments is completed. Results vary depending on the patient, but for most people, results will last about a year."