



Labial Hypertrophy

What are labial hypertrophy and labial asymmetry?

Labial hypertrophy is an increase in the size of one or both of the “lips” of the vagina, called the labia. Labial hypertrophy can affect the inner labia, known as the labia minora, or the outer labia, called the labia majora. When only one side of the labia is enlarged, the condition is referred to as labial asymmetry. There is no definition of “normal” labia size, but sometimes the labia minora or majora are larger than those of many other girls or larger on one side.

What should you do if you are worried about your labia?

Some girls with labial hypertrophy may feel worried about the appearance of their labia. They may be embarrassed to wear bathing suits or tight clothing in front of others, and they may be self-conscious during sexual activity. If you have ever felt this way, it is important to mention it to your health care provider.

What causes labial hypertrophy?

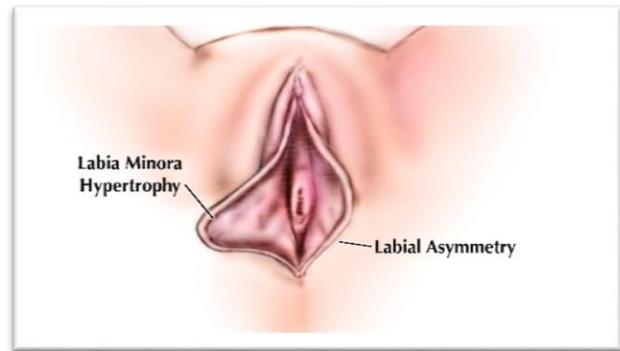
The underlying cause of why some girls have larger labia than others is unknown, but it is completely normal for girls and women to have different sizes of labia. Sometimes labia have been enlarged since birth, but many times girls first notice an increase in size of their labia during puberty.

How can your healthcare provider help?

If you have concerns about the appearance of your labia, or if you are experiencing pain or irritation, it is important to be examined by your healthcare provider. They can do a careful exam to make sure everything is healthy and talk to you about your concerns.

What are the symptoms of labial hypertrophy?

Usually labial hypertrophy causes no problems or symptoms. Some girls may develop irritation or pain when wearing underwear or tight-fitting clothing. Labial hypertrophy may interfere with exercise or certain activities that put pressure on the pubic area, such as horseback riding, bike riding, or sexual activity. Rarely, girls with frequent irritation can develop an infection of the labia or vulva, which should be treated by a healthcare provider.



How is labial asymmetry treated?

If you have no pain, irritation or infection in your vagina, then it is important to remember that your body is healthy and normal no matter the size of your labia. All girls should practice good hygiene, washing their genitalia once per day with mild, scent-free, color-free, chemical-free soap. If you have labial hypertrophy, you should avoid wearing tight underwear and clothing, and during your period, you should use chemical-free sanitary pads to prevent irritation. Over the counter topical mild ointments can be used to prevent irritation.

If you have persistent pain, irritation or infections, talk to your provider about other options. Labioplasty, a major surgery, is reserved for extreme cases. Remember, any surgery has risks, and a labioplasty includes the risks of bleeding, infection, scarring or chronic pain. Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about all the risks of surgery and to have all your questions answered.

Resources:

If you are curious about the wide variety of normal labia, check out these online resources. You should know that they contain a lot of images of normal labia.

<http://www.nickkarras.com/petals-book.html>

<http://www.greatwallofvagina.co.uk/home>