

Repair and Restoration

Pelvic and vaginal surgery benefit from new technology



As women of the baby boom generation begin reaching age 60 and beyond, there is a growing awareness of symptomatic pelvic prolapse—a weakening of the muscles that hold in place the organs located within the pelvis. These women visit their gynecologist complaining of a sensation of pressure and fullness in their pelvis, a relentless feeling of being constipated, worsening incontinence and/or a visible bulge in their pelvis.

Fortunately, there are safe and extremely effective ways to correct pelvic prolapse with a simple procedure that can be performed on an outpatient basis or with a single night's stay in the hospital.

Minimally invasive surgery techniques and new materials enable surgeons to strengthen weak pelvic muscles or even replace them entirely. The long incision of conventional surgery is eliminated, and patients do not have to endure days with an indwelling catheter. Urogynecologists, gynecologists and urologists are typically the most qualified specialists to perform these advanced new surgeries.

Special Care for Intimate Areas

A related surgical procedure that can be performed at the same time as pelvic prolapse repair, or as a separate procedure, is called vaginoplasty. This surgery, which is rapidly gaining in popularity, is also known by the name vaginal rejuvenation. This is the surgical tightening—or narrowing—of the vaginal canal. Women who request this procedure most often cite birth trauma, tissue stretching and/or improper surgical healing as their primary motivation for having the surgery.

Still another procedure that is being requested more and more frequently is called labiaplasty. In this procedure, large or uneven labia minora (the “minor lips”) are sculpted to look more pleasing and less prominent. Complaints that lead to this surgery include pain, irritation, and pulling and/or rubbing when wearing tight clothing, horseback riding, participating in sports or having sexual intercourse. Young women often report severe embarrassment when wearing a swimsuit.

There are also procedures available to either decrease or increase the size of the labia majora.

Although vaginoplasty and labiaplasty are considered cosmetic procedures and, therefore, are not typically covered by insurance, women often choose to pay for these procedures out of pocket for the physical and psychological benefits the surgeries can impart. ❖



Strong and durable materials made of open-weave polypropylene (pictured at left) and living tissue enable surgeons to strengthen or replace weak and damaged pelvic muscles.