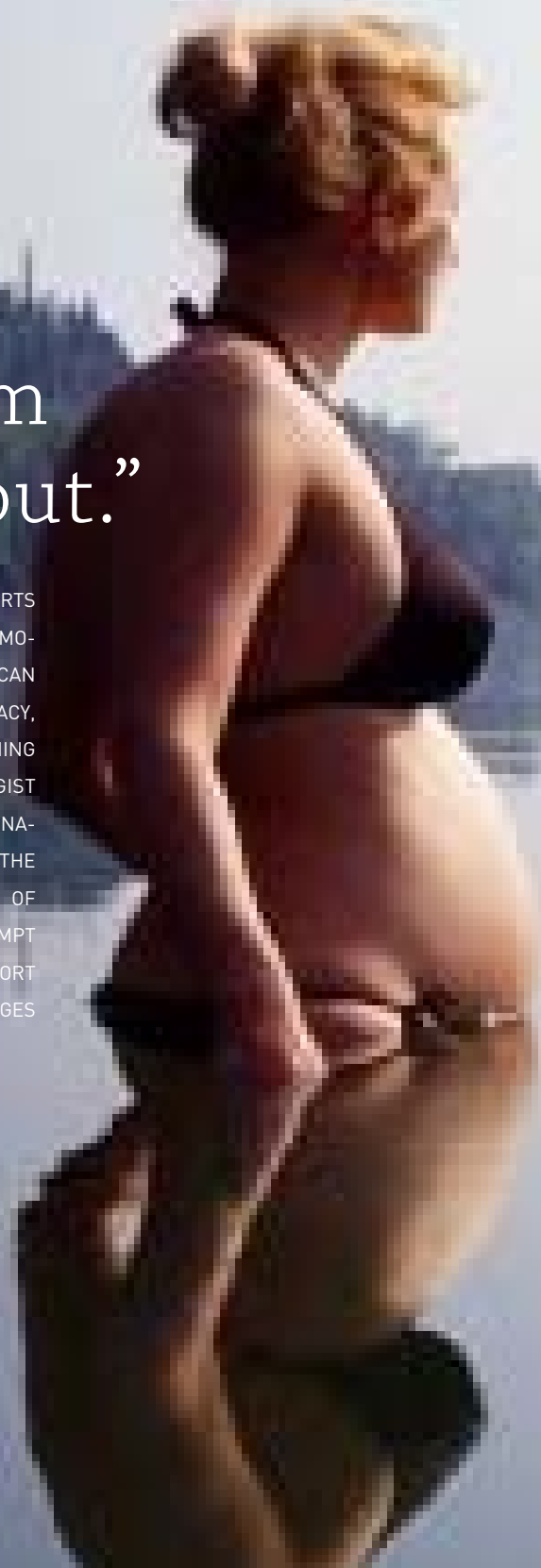


# “I have a problem no one talks about.”

PREGNANCY CAN PRODUCE CHANGES IN THE MOST PRIVATE PARTS OF OUR BODIES, BOTH INSIDE AND OUT. THIS CAN HAVE AN EMOTIONAL IMPACT ON HOW WE FEEL ABOUT OURSELVES, AND CAN ALSO PRESENT PHYSICAL PROBLEMS WHEN IT COMES TO INTIMACY, CERTAIN ACTIVITIES SUCH AS BIKE RIDING AND EVEN CLOTHING OPTIONS. ACCORDING TO ATLANTA-BASED UROGYNECOLOGIST JOHN MIKLOS, MD, “THE BIGGEST MYTH ABOUT VAGINAL REJUVENATION IS THAT WOMEN ARE GETTING THESE PROCEDURES FOR THE MEN IN THEIR LIVES. IN FACT, A VAST MAJORITY PERCENT OF PATIENTS COME SEEK OUT VAGINAL REJUVENATION IN AN ATTEMPT TO IMPROVE *THEIR* QUALITY OF LIFE BECAUSE OF PAIN, DISCOMFORT OR DIMINISHED SEXUAL SENSATION DUE TO PHYSICAL CHANGES THAT RESULT FROM CHILDBIRTH.”



## PREVENTION | KEGEL EXERCISE


You’ve probably heard about Kegel exercise—contracting the vaginal muscles as though trying to stop the flow of urine—and it can be a powerful tool for maintaining the strength of the vaginal muscles. When practiced during pregnancy, the exercise helps make the pushing associated with childbirth easier and, in theory, can also decrease the chance of tears during delivery. Postpartum, Kegel exercise can help aid healing from an episiotomy and will also help tone the vaginal muscles to increase sexual sensation.

## REPAIR | VAGINAL REJUVENATION

Externally, childbirth and the hormone changes related to pregnancy can cause the labia (vaginal lips) to stretch and become disfigured. In addition, episiotomy scars can heal poorly, leading to an unattractive appearance and even discomfort or pain during intercourse. Labiaplasty surgery reduces and reshapes the labia, lending a more youthful appearance.

Traumatic childbirth may also lead to internal vaginal relaxation that may diminish vaginal friction during intercourse. “It’s well documented scientifically that multiple births cause an increased incidence of vaginal relaxation,” says Dr. Miklos. “Having a baby can distort the anatomy of the birth canal since the average baby’s head is 9.5 centimeters in diameter.” Patients who do not respond well to Kegel exercises may ultimately choose to have a form of vaginal rejuvenation surgery known as a vaginoplasty. This type of surgery is performed in an attempt to enhance vaginal muscle tone and to improve the amount of friction encountered during intercourse.

Labiaplasty and vaginoplasty procedures are performed in an office- or hospital-based surgical suite and patients often go home the same day. However, in some cases of vaginoplasty, an overnight stay may be recommended to reduce anxiety. Patients experience discomfort for a couple of days after surgery but the pain is easily managed with pain and anti-inflammatory medications. Many patients have both procedures performed simultaneously, thus requiring only one visit to the operating suite.

 **COST**  
TK from Dr. Miklos

**INSIDE**  
*tip*

Vaginal rejuvenation isn’t just for new moms. Genetics, a history of extreme activity and the natural aging process can lead to vaginal relaxation as well.



JOY, 38

“After giving birth to two children vaginally, stretch marks are the least of my concerns. Nobody ever discusses the fact that your vaginal area can get torn and stretched. It’s a huge intimacy issue that has left me feeling self-conscious.”

