

# Tight and full of might

Instead of sharing chocolates and sweet nothings this Valentine's Day, what about something more radical? Emily Chia finds out more about laser vaginal rejuvenation

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an and women gush about their improved sexual experience to Dr Matlock. Husbands tell the

gynaecologist that "the sex is good" after their wives see him and making love is like "having the same wife, but a new woman". Such comments give Dr David L. Matlock, founder and director of The Laser Vaginal Rejuvenation Center of Los Angeles, much satisfaction that he has done a good job. He talks to Today's Parents about his work.

What is Laser Vaginal Rejuvenation® (LVR®)? LVR is a one-hour bloodless outpatient surgery designed to enhance sexual gratification for women who feel their vaginal walls have loosened. I created the procedure because more women were telling me that they wanted their insides to feel the same way they did when they were 16 or 18, or before they had children.

When a patient has a relaxed vagina, what that means is the muscles are not firm and have poor tone, strength and control. When that happens, the vagina is not at its peak condition as the internal and external diameters have increased and the muscles of the perineum are lax.

When the vagina is relaxed, women sometimes experience involuntarily urine loss with coughing, sneezing, laughing, exercising or sex. That is socially embarrassing and hygienically unacceptable to a woman. Besides involuntary stress incontinence, women who have relaxed vaginas are unable to enjoy sex as much either.

LVR can also be used for reconstruction purposes for those involved in saddle injuries or accidents.

Why do women experience vaginal relaxation?

The pelvic organs include the vagina, uterus, bladder, and rectum. These organs are held in position by three types of support: muscles, sheets of tissue called fascia and ligaments. During childbirth, as the baby passes through the birth



canal, the muscles, fascia, and ligaments separate and may be weakened. That weakening may cause the pelvic organs to drop from their normal positions.

Although women who have gone through multiple childbirths are prone to having relaxed vaginas, the problem is not exclusive to this group of women alone. The weakening can happen to women who have not experienced childbirth too. These women could have inherited weakness of the supporting tissues, suffered unusual strain on the supporting tissues as a result of a chronic cough, experienced unusual increases in abdominal pressure or suffered from obesity.

**Why did you think there was a need for LVR?** It started when a 35-year-old lady came to see me. She had four children and mild stress incontinence. I suggested that she do a Laser Anterior and Posterior Repair – a traditional procedure for the treatment of vaginal relaxation. At that time, I had been doing liposculpting for over 18 years. I had seen over 4000 patients and had developed a strong aesthetic surgery mindset. What I did for her was incorporate the use of lasers and other techniques that were taken from liposuction to create a bloodless procedure. This procedure also incorporated plastic surgical techniques for suturing as I was concerned with form, function and aesthetics. I wanted things to look pre- on the outside. The surgery helped the patient overcome stress incontinence. Great sex was an added benefit!

**What is the procedure like when someone comes into your clinic?** I'll spend as much as 45-60 minutes with the patient. The patient needs to be screened, talked to and consulted with. I use pre- and post-op pictures and models to describe the procedure. I give them a mirror and show them exactly what will be done. I want to educate them so that they can make a decision as to whether the procedure is right for them.

*“More women were telling me that they wanted their insides to feel the same way they did when they were 16”  
Dr David Matlock of the Laser Vaginal Rejuvenation Centre*

**Is LVR suitable for all women?** LVR is not for every woman. It is for women who have normal sexual functioning. I reject patients with sexual dysfunction such as those who experience pain or discomfort during sex or those that do not achieve orgasm. I don't offer LVR to these women because they may require a sex therapist, psychiatrist or other healthcare providers. I also do not do the operation if I see only the husband pushing for it.

The side effects of LVR are similar to all surgery: haemorrhaging and infections. But the incidence of that is less than one per cent. In my ten years of performing this surgery globally on more than 2000 patients, I have not come across problems with scarring. In fact, the success rate when it comes to sexual gratification is 100 per cent.

**What happens after the surgery?** The patient will fully recover in six weeks but most patients feel good enough to go back to work within seven days. Once the patient has undergone the surgery, which costs between US\$7500 to US\$8500, the results are permanent, unless the patient opts for natural childbirth again. ☺