

New Treatment for Vaginal Atrophy

Vaginal Atrophy, sometimes called *atrophic vaginitis (AV)*, is a common condition affecting tens of millions of women in the U.S. The symptoms include chronic vaginal dryness, painful vaginal burning, vaginal irritation, urinary urgency and urinary frequency. Sexual intercourse is usually painful and for some women it is unbearable. This condition is caused by low estrogen levels that lead to a thinning and drying out of the mucous membrane lining of the vagina.

The most common cause of low estrogen levels is menopause. The symptoms of AV range from mild vaginal dryness to severe burning pain. Another cause of loss of estrogen is chemotherapy which can trigger premature menopause. Breast cancer survivors can experience severe AV since they are not allowed to use estrogen and their hormone treatments often include medications that block the effects of estrogen.

There are many treatments for AV but most of them involve the use of estrogen hormone. Estrogen skin patches, creams, gels, implantable estrogen pellets and oral estrogen all result in estrogen hormone circulating through the blood but often do not provide much relief for AV. This is because the thin vaginal lining does not have very good circulation to start with, so not very much estrogen makes it to those tissues. It would be like swallowing a moisturizer medication to treat dry hands. Topical treatment for certain conditions is far more effective.

Placing the estrogen inside the vagina is a more effective treatment, but this approach has risks, which include post-menopausal bleeding, risk of uterine cancer (small), plus the messy side effects of using vaginal creams. Breast cancer survivors and breastfeeding women should not be using estrogen, even in a low dose vaginal form. Additionally, estrogen can increase the risk of heart attack, stroke and blood clots.

Osphena, a new prescription drug being heavily marketed by the Pharmaceutical industry, is the first and only oral non-estrogen medication approved for the relief of vaginal dryness. Technically, the drug is still related to estrogen because it is a SERM (selective estrogen receptor modulator), meaning it shares some but not all of the properties of normal estrogen. Despite its persuasive marketing, clinical data show the drug to be only minimally effective and very costly and it must be taken daily.

Over-the-counter products such as vaginal moisturizers and vaginal lubricants have been around for a while, but they provide minimal and very short-term relief, and in many cases the vaginal tissues are so sensitive that even these supposedly soothing products can cause vaginal pain and discomfort.

Fortunately for millions of women, there is a brand new laser-based treatment now available for this condition. Dr. Bryan Jick, a Board-Certified Gynecologist in Pasadena, California with more than 25 years of experience in women's health, is now offering the Valayza™ procedure, a laser-based treatment for vaginal atrophy.

The Valayza™ is done using the MonaLisa Touch™ laser device. This device took years to develop and is used for ONLY one procedure, the treatment of vaginal atrophy, and is the only laser approved in the US for use inside the vagina.

This new and nearly painless procedure requires just three brief sessions, spaced about six weeks apart. The laser stimulates the growth of collagen causing the vaginal mucous membrane lining to become thicker, similar to the lining seen when estrogen is present.

The results are literally "too good to be true", but they are real! In one study of 30 women, "all 30 patients experienced overwhelmingly positive and immediate results," said Dr. Mickey Karram!. "The women showed highly statistically significant improvement in symptoms – including dryness, pain, itching, painful urination and painful intercourse after the first treatment. They experienced no side effects or adverse reactions and showed an escalation of progress with each subsequent treatment."

Reversal of vaginal atrophy, restoration of vaginal lubrication and moisture and dramatic improvements in sexual pleasure, satisfaction and sensation are all possible in a very short time and with just a few simple, high-tech, vaginal laser treatments. No estrogen hormone is needed.

The Valayza™ procedure is not the same thing as Laser Vaginal Rejuvenation (LVR). Laser vaginal rejuvenation (LVR) treatments being promoted use surgical cutting lasers which are not FDA approved for use in the vagina. LVR takes place in an Operating Room under spinal or epidural anesthesia. The laser is used to cut and dissect, and muscles are also stitched during the typical LVR. This is major surgery with the potential for risks and complications, and usually requires 4-6 weeks off work. Furthermore, many plastic surgeons perform LVR but they have far less training or experience in the anatomy and physiology of the vaginal area than a gynecologist.

The Valayza™ is a 10 minute office based procedure. There is no anesthesia, no cutting, and maybe one day of downtime. Sex can be resumed in 2-3 days, not 6-8 weeks later. Patients can usually return to work the next day.

The MonaLisa Touch laser has been in use in Europe for more than 8 years, in Australia for over 4 years and was recently approved by the FDA for use in the U.S. One doctor in Australia has performed over 1,000 successful treatments with consistently positive results and no complicationsⁱⁱ.

If you are suffering from vaginal atrophy (VA) which includes the symptoms of vaginal dryness, vaginal burning, vaginal pain, and/or pain during intercourse, and if you cannot or do not want to use estrogen, then the Valayza™ just might be the perfect treatment for you.

The 3 R's of Valayza™ are renew, restore and revive! Renew the vaginal lining using the laser to stimulate new cell growth. Restore the tissues to a more youthful state, with increased vaginal moisture and lubrication and decreased pain, burning and dryness. Revive your sex life!

Call Fair Oaks Women's Health at (626) 304-2626 to schedule a gyn consultation, to book a Valayza™ Procedure or to request more information. We hope to hear from you soon!

ⁱ Press Release from Cynosure, Inc. WESTFORD, Mass., Dec. 3, 2014 /PRNewswire

ⁱⁱ Issue 65, Aug-Oct 2014. Cosmetic Surgery and Beauty Magazine, pages 90-91. www.cosbeauty.com.au