The normal conformation of the perineum prevents the ingress of air, which carries bacteria and other debris, into the genital tract, anus and the vulva. As a mare ages and / or produces foals, the vulvar lips (labiae) will lose elasticity and change in shape. Poor perineal conformation can lead to wind-sucking, which can lead to chronic inflammation in the vagina (vaginitis), cervix (cervicitis) and potentially the uterus (metritis) that can reduce fertility.

Wind-sucking during pregnancy can lead to abnormalities in the developing fetus or abortion. This mare is susceptible to infections due to the anus being regressed and the labiae not being tight, which allows air and other contaminants inside the genital tract. Each time the mare defecates, feces will fall into the vulva.

It is important to note that once a vulvoplasty has been performed on a mare, she will need to remain sutured for the remainder of her life, even if the surgery was done for performance reasons. If she is producing foals, the sutures should be removed a few days prior to expected foaling date and then new sutures put in post-breeding. A common procedure on mares with poor perineal conformation used to reduce “wind- sucking” and therefore infections of the mare’s reproductive tract is a vulvoplasty, commonly called a Caslick’s. A Caslick’s is the surgical closing of the upper part of the vulva.