

CHOOSING WISELY

A PATIENT-EDUCATION TOOL FROM
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COSMETIC SURGERY SAFETY TIPS

Choosing to have cosmetic (*aesthetic*) surgery is a big and very personal decision. Aesthetic surgery is no different from any other medical procedure, and if it isn't performed properly, patients can face lifelong consequences and even death. For these reasons and more, it's important for patients to "do their homework" to learn about the benefits and risks of the surgery—and the location where the surgery is being performed—before agreeing to it. If you're considering cosmetic surgery, here are some safety tips to keep in mind.

Do your homework

Before making an appointment, do some research on the location where your surgery will be performed: visit the facility to see what it's like and research its reputation. Calling the Better Business Bureau is a good first step. Be especially careful of "Medi-spas," which can be found in beauty salons, spas, or malls. These locations usually do not have medical staff onsite, which is dangerous if problems occur with your surgery. If you choose a Medi-spa, always ask for the names and training/credentials of the medical personnel who are responsible for supervising the facility.

Don't "bargain shop"

If you are receiving a procedure that is considerably less expensive than usual, it's safe to assume that you're not getting the best treatment. The same holds true for doctors: the most qualified plastic surgeon may not be the most or least expensive.

Make sure a doctor is onsite

In the case of an emergency, it's very important for a doctor to be present. Most cosmetic procedures should be performed by a doctor who is board-certified in plastic surgery or dermatology with equal training and experience. If a procedure is not being performed by a doctor, the supervising doctor should be present and available to answer questions and respond to problems that may occur while the procedure is being done.

Ask questions

What are the doctor's qualifications for performing cosmetic surgery? Is he/she a member of a medical specialty organization, for example, the American Board of Plastic Surgery? How many times has he/she performed the surgery that you're interested in? Does the procedure have any side effects and, if so, what are they? As a rule, never allow a non-medical, unlicensed person perform a medical procedure; all procedures should be supervised by a doctor who is board-certified in plastic surgery or dermatology.



Ask about possible side effects, including pain

Discomfort or pain may occur after certain cosmetic treatments. Before agreeing to any surgery, you should be fully informed of all possible benefits and side effects. If you do not feel completely comfortable with a specific doctor or location, find another. And remember—cosmetic procedures should never be done in someone's home, in a hotel, or at a party.

KNOW YOUR MEDICAL HISTORY

Your doctor will ask questions about your complete medical history. Be prepared with this information, including any current medications that you are taking. Understanding your medical history will help your doctor to make sure that the surgery will not cause any problems.

PATIENT CHECKLIST

Finding the Right Cosmetic Plastic Surgeon

- Confirm board certification: It's the best sign of training in a particular medical or surgical area. Look for certification by the American Board of Plastic Surgery, or the American Board of Dermatology. Contact the Board to confirm membership.
- Check if the doctor/surgeon is a member of the American Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, the American Academy of Dermatology, or the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery.
- Request a consultation: At this time, you can ask important questions and learn the risks and benefits of the surgery.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:
TALK TO YOUR PHYSICIAN OR VISIT
WWW.AESTHETICENHANCE.ORG**

