

Preparing for Your Cosmetic Surgery Consultation



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Step 1

A phrase that is often heard on TV commercials also applies to a plastic surgical consultation, "An informed person is our best patient." With the barrage of physicians claiming to perform cosmetic surgery, a person should have completed a reasonable amount of homework prior to consulting a cosmetic surgeon.

The first step is determining which plastic surgeon is best. Not all physicians are equally trained to perform cosmetic surgery. Personal referrals and referrals from your family physician, dermatologist or ob/gyn are almost always an excellent source of information. Nurses who work in operating rooms, hospitals, and emergency rooms can provide excellent insight about the plastic surgeon they prefer. X-ray technicians

who perform mammograms see hundreds of women's breasts and can easily identify which surgeon performs the best breast augmentation, reduction or mastopexy. Massage therapists, skin care specialists and estheticians can provide information about surgeons who perform liposuction and facial cosmetic surgery well. These specialists can also provide valuable information about the surgeon's personality, his office staff and follow-up care.

Among non-medical sources of information are hair stylists, beauticians, and manicurists. These individuals see the results after surgery and can invariably name those surgeons who do it best. As I have learned over the years, women are more likely to discuss their frank, uncensored opinion of a surgeon or procedure with their hair stylist than with their husband or boyfriend.

Included in this information-gathering period should always be a call to The American Society of Plastic Surgeons at 1-847-228-9900. They can provide you with the names of the board certified plastic surgeons in your area. This is also an excellent source of general information on all cosmetic procedures. Another consideration should be the physician's malpractice history. There are many internet websites where this information can be found. There may be a small charge for this service, but

seeing that a particular physician has had multiple malpractice claims in Maryland, Virginia or D.C. is a red flag and often a surgeon to avoid.

After gathering all the hard evidence, one or two plastic surgeon's names will be consistently named as being excellent. Those are the surgeons you should visit for a cosmetic consultation. Even before the office visit, your initial telephone call to make the appointment will leave you with an impression of the surgeon's office and philosophy. Neither an overly aggressive nor an indifferent telephone approach are appropriate. You should be treated with respect, given complete general information and be afforded enough options for an appointment that your schedule is not disrupted. Of all the factors that will help you decide which plastic surgeon is best, experience, reputation and patient care are the most important. While cost is always a consideration, choosing a surgeon simply on the basis of cost is dangerous. Competent plastic surgeons are not used car salesmen and the cost of your surgery is not a negotiable expense. A poorly performed operation done by an inexperienced or unqualified surgeon will cost the patient thousands of dollars to correct, if correction is possible.

Proceed cautiously, do your homework and become educated prior to your visit.