

How to SELECT A PLASTIC SURGEON

Aberdeen Plastic Surgery Associates is now holding a monthly outreach clinic in Huron. Did you know you can have surgery in Huron?

With so many new surgery options today, it seems more and more people are choosing to have their bodies cosmetically enhanced to improve their looks.

In 2006, 11 million Americans had a cosmetic medical procedure performed, according to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS). Of those, more than 1.85 million were surgical procedures and 9.15 million were non-surgical. This is an increase of 7% from 2005.

"There are many reasons why a person decides to have cosmetic surgery," says Dr. Sanjay Mukerji of Aberdeen. "Many have goals to improve their physical appearance through aesthetic surgery, some seek a way to improve the imperfections Mother Nature has handed down to them, or wish to correct a perceived flaw that will make them feel less self-conscious."

Nationwide, the most popular cosmetic surgeries last year were breast augmentation, liposuction, nose reshaping (rhinoplasty), eyelid surgery (blepharoplasty), and tummy tucks (abdominoplasty), reports the ASPS. The top non-surgical procedure was botox injections.

EVERYBODY'S DOING IT

Although mostly women seek out cosmetic surgery procedures, the number of male patients is growing. Statistics show that approximately 1 million cosmetic surgery procedures were performed on men in the United States in 2006, according to the ASPS approximately 9 percent of the total number of patients.

For men, the top five procedures were nose reshaping, eyelid surgery, liposuction, hair transplant and breast reduction in men (gynecomastia).

The demand for cosmetic treatments will continue to grow over the next several years, as baby boomers resist aging. A recent survey of baby boomers by AARP says 50 percent of

those surveyed are unhappy that they are aging, and 18 percent, plan to actively resist it. Nearly 65% of the 11 million surgical and non-surgical cosmetic procedures performed in 2006 were on 30- to 54-year olds, according to the ASPS.

A rapidly increasing number of new procedures may also account for the growing interest in cosmetic surgery. "We have solutions for fine lines, minor acne, and overall skin rejuvenation, including laser skin rejuvenation and chemical peels," Mukerji states.

NOT ONLY COSMETIC...

Plastic surgery encompasses more than cosmetic surgery, though. In 2006, 5.2 million reconstructive surgery procedures were performed, according to the ASPS.

Reconstructive procedures includes animal bite repairs, birth defect reconstruction, breast reconstruction (after mastectomy), breast reduction, hand surgery, tumor removal, microsurgery, skin grafts, scar revision and laceration repair.

Reconstructive procedures are usually medically necessary and the cost of surgery may be covered by insurance.

A SURGEON FOR YOU

Finding the right plastic surgeon can be bewildering. To find a good plastic surgeon, Dr. Mukerji advises looking at a few important factors: Your surgeon should have formal surgical training in plastics, reconstructive, and cosmetic surgery.

"First and foremost, you should ask if the surgeon is board certified or board eligible," he says. Eligibility by the American Board of Plastic Surgery indicates the surgeon has completed at least two years of plastic surgery and three years of general surgery training. Board certification indicates that he or she has passed the oral and written examinations."

Schedule a consultation. The consultation is an opportunity for both you

and the surgeon to meet and discuss your interests and goals in surgery. Be prepared to ask all the questions you want during this meeting. Just like preparing a speech, you may even want to write down the questions you have so you don't forget them. This list is important, as it is easy to get nervous and forget what you want to ask. This meeting will give you an opportunity not only to evaluate the surgeon's skills, training, style and attitude but it is your chance to decide if this is the person you want to perform your surgery.

Don't be shy. Be sure the doctor explains everything in terms you understand. The doctor should explain the benefits of the surgery and how it can meet your expectations. He or she should be candid with you about the risks of the procedure, as well as possible other outcomes and what happens if all does not go as planned. That way, you can make an informed choice. Depending on what feature you are hoping to change, the doctor may suggest that an additional procedure be performed in conjunction with the original procedure to achieve the true desired look. These suggestions should not, however, be pressuring comments. Suggestions are only being offered to help you achieve the optimal result.

Finally, during your consultation, listen carefully to what is recommended and clarify what can be realistically expected. "One needs to understand that plastic surgery is an art and not a perfect science" notes Mukerji, "but I believe by forming a comfortable partnership with my patients, I can guide them through their choices helping them match their goals with realistic expectations.

For more information about selecting a plastic surgeon, contact Aberdeen Plastic Surgery Associates, (605) 725-5030.