

HOW TO SELECT A PLASTIC SURGEON

Selecting a plastic surgeon can be a very difficult process, especially for those who do not have the benefit of a direct referral from a trusted physician, friend, or family member who has had direct experience with a plastic surgeon. As a result of over-marketing, patients are often times more confused than informed, thus making the decision on how to choose a plastic surgeon even more challenging. Fortunately, there are some simple steps you can take to ensure that you are making an informed decision regarding who you will select to be your plastic surgeon.

Step 1: Certification/American Board Of Plastic Surgery

A surgeon must be certified by the [American Board of Plastic Surgery](#), the only board accredited by the [American Board of Medical Specialties](#) (ABMS) that recognizes expertise pertinent to the specific area of plastic surgery. Simply put, any other board certification does not validate competence in the distinct specialty of plastic surgery. By choosing a plastic surgeon who has this specific certification, a patient can be assured that the surgeon has completed an approved and rigorous residency training program that includes multiple essential disciplines of surgical practice, especially aesthetic and reconstructive plastic surgery.

Only board certified plastic surgeons are eligible for membership in the prestigious [American Society of Plastic Surgeons](#). Good standing in the society is another indicator that your plastic surgeon has been accepted into a plastic surgery specialty organization that promotes high standards for patient care and continuing education.

Step 2: Active membership in the [American Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery](#)

An appropriately qualified aesthetic surgeon should be in good standing with the [American Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery](#). Only board certified plastic surgeons ([American Board of Plastic Surgery](#)) who have chosen cosmetic surgery as their primary specialty interest, demonstrated expertise in aesthetic surgery, and whose clinical practice conduct and ethical standards have been carefully scrutinized through an intense peer review process, are eligible for affiliation with the [American Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery](#).

Step 3: Direct referral from a trusted physician or satisfied patients, friends, or family members

Once a surgeon has met the first two essential qualifications, the decision as to how to select a plastic surgeon becomes more subjective. While diligent research via the internet, practice brochures, and other available resources may prove to be of tremendous value for many people, a direct referral from a friend or family member who has had first hand experience with the surgeon may also be a powerful influence on the decision making process. The overall satisfaction with the level of service, quality of care, surgical result and post-operative care is often as meaningful as a surgeon's credentials. The enthusiastic endorsement of a plastic surgeon by a completely satisfied prior patient, while demonstrating the positive physical and psychological changes they have experienced, is the most powerful and direct information source to consider when selecting a plastic surgeon.

Step 4: Your consultation with your surgeon

The consultation with your surgeon should be a revealing process, furnishing direct information about the practice environment and philosophical approach of the plastic

surgeon you are considering. An engaging and informative atmosphere promotes trust and reassurance, while instilling confidence that your needs and goals are being appreciated. The level of experience of the plastic surgeon in the area of your interest should be easily apparent through the course of conversation and responses to your probing questions. Conversely, if your surgeon's remarks make you feel apprehensive, you might want to consider looking for a second opinion. Confident candor from the surgeon when answering your questions is necessary for generating trust, and demonstrates willingness of the surgeon to be straight-forward with remarks and suggestions. Attentive listening to patient concerns and understanding specific patient goals and expectations is vital for an appropriate recommendation. Not all patient concerns should result in surgical recommendations. It is the responsibility of the surgeon to resist the surgical option when the anticipated outcome will not benefit the patient.

Step 5: Patient Satisfaction

Having intimate knowledge of a prior patient's satisfaction with their surgical results is unquestionably the most compelling factor for choosing a plastic surgeon. Numerous elements related to the overall experience merge to create a person's level of satisfaction. Quality of care and a surgical result that meets or even exceeds expectations, remain the two most important factors in selecting your plastic surgeon. The manner in which a patient is cared for before and after surgery will leave a lasting impression. The consultation and preparation process should be relaxed and thorough. Your surgeon should provide pertinent information regarding the procedures you are considering and address your concerns directly. The clinical staff should be experienced in patient care, easily accessible to answer your questions, and provide direct information to your surgeon regarding your concerns and recovery. This reflects attention to detail, attention to patient safety, attention to patient comfort and attention to compassionate accommodation, thereby instilling confidence that the transition to post-operative care will be equally thorough. Each and every patient has the singular primary purpose of obtaining the best possible result from surgery. A patient's level of satisfaction is the measure of how well this goal is achieved.

Step 6: Cost

While cost should not be the most decisive factor in selecting your plastic surgeon, it is still a very important consideration for most patients. In order to adequately evaluate the real cost of a given procedure, fair comparisons are necessary. Typically not all costs related to the surgical experience are separately quoted and included in the fee, thus making direct comparisons difficult. A comprehensive fee includes a variety of costs associated with surgery such as the surgeon's fee, the anesthesiologist's fee, the surgical facility fee, the cost of supplies, such as pain pumps, implants and garments, post-operative dressings, overnight stay expenses, post-operative home nurse visits, post-operative office visits, supplemental multivitamin programs and medically related spa services.

Looking at the overall value of the services you receive is another way to help you make the right decision when selecting a plastic surgeon. Factors to be included in your evaluation should include the professionalism of the staff and support personnel, the comfort and attention to detail you receive from the staff, the quality and safety of the surgeons office and surgery center, the care you receive before and after surgery and finally, your surgical result.