

Cosmetic Surgery Guide for Every Patient



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WELCOME

Congratulations on your decision to undergo a cosmetic procedure! You've taken a big step to improve your appearance and feel better about yourself. Millions of men and women around the globe undergo cosmetic surgery to correct flaws in their figure, erase the signs of aging and feel more self-confident. We live in a time where it's now possible to enhance your natural beauty through innovative surgical techniques and enjoy a speedy recovery.

If you have been struggling with low self-esteem because of physical imperfections or figure flaws, you can work with a board-certified cosmetic surgeon to make physical improvements.

Doing some research about different procedures is a necessary step in this process because it's important for patients to be armed with as much knowledge as possible. Learning what a procedure entails and how it is performed can help you set realistic expectations about the outcome of surgery. You also need to seek out a qualified, experienced and board-certified cosmetic surgeon who you feel comfortable with and who has a track record of success. Doing your homework will not only help you feel more relaxed during the process but also reduce the risk of serious complications.

This guide provides you with essential steps and tips when considering cosmetic surgery and then undergoing the procedure. You'll learn how to set realistic expectations, what to look for when researching doctors, and how to prepare for your surgery.

Congratulations again on taking a positive step to improve your life! Thank you for downloading this guide. If you have questions regarding specific procedures or want to learn more about our practice, please call or email us at your convenience. We can also set up a consultation to determine which cosmetic procedure is right for you.

Let's get started.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Doing Your Research
- Being Realistic About Results
- Finding the Right Surgeon for You
- The Surgical Center
- Managing the Cost of Cosmetic Surgery
- Your Consultation
- How to Prepare for Your Procedure
- Understanding Potential for Risks & Complications
- Maintaining Your Cosmetic Surgery Results



DOING YOUR RESEARCH

Whether you've been impressed by the results of a friend undergoing cosmetic surgery or have been thinking about getting surgery for a while, you deserve to work with only the most qualified surgeon and receive quality care.

Finding the right physician can be a daunting and even overwhelming process since there are so many options out there and many doctors and clinics advertise all types of procedures. Who can you really trust to work on your body or face? Here are some important things to keep in mind:

Your Online Search

For many prospective patients, the search for a cosmetic surgeon begins online. Some discover procedures online after reading an advertisement or an article about the latest cosmetic surgery treatment options. However, you cannot believe everything you read since a lot of content on the web is simply an advertisement. It's always a good idea to turn to a surgeon's website instead of online magazines and other publications when researching procedures. You can also reach out to the surgeon's office to ask about any materials they can send you via email or directly to your regular mailbox.

Physician Websites

Experienced and talented physicians will always have a website to share with their patients. While this won't be the only reason to choose one doctor over another, you do want to work with a physician who has a good reputation, a gallery of before and after photos showcasing their work, and information about their credentials, background, and areas of expertise. Look for proof of board-certification and a list of any affiliations and organizations that demonstrate the doctor's commitment to their careers and level of success.

Before and After Photos

You will never know what the outcome of your procedure will be but choosing to work with a doctor who has performed many of the same procedures you are interested in on patients who are of a similar age and skin type as you can be a wise decision. Take some time to browse before and after photos online and in the office during a consultation to explore your options and assess the physician's skill level. Just be mindful that photos can be adulterated using photo editing software so what you see may not always be 100 percent accurate.

Social Media Sites

Many physicians are making use of social media sites like Facebook and Twitter to reach a wider audience. You may find case studies, before and after photos, and updates about new techniques or procedures they are introducing to their practice on these sites.

Some doctors share blog content about cosmetic surgery trends and developments which can be another valuable resource when researching online. Take some time to read patient reviews on Facebook, Google+, and on sites like Real Self where community members share unbiased reviews about their experiences. These can be valuable sources of information when you want sincere, unedited patient experiences.

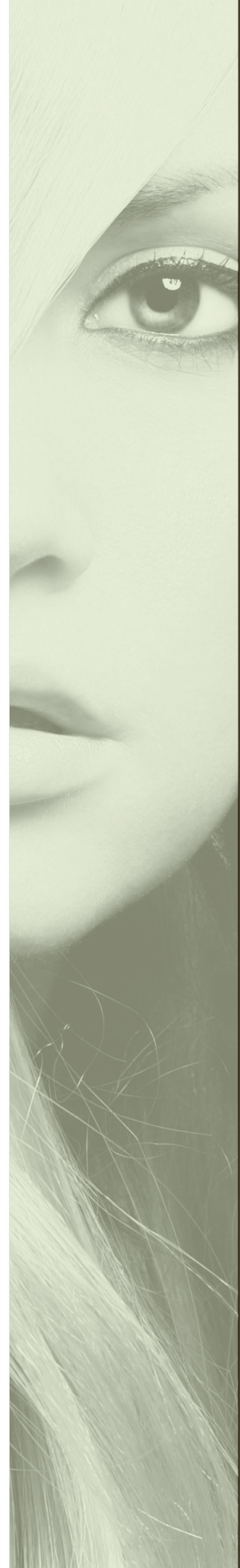
Other Trusted Resources

Plastic and cosmetic surgery organizations, as well as some leading healthcare websites, are also valuable sources of information for patients conducting research about different procedures. Some recommend resources to get you started:

- **American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS)**
- **American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery**
- **The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery**
- **International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ISAPS)**
- **American Board of Plastic Surgery (ABPS)**
- **Smart Beauty Guide (created by The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery)**

Your Offline Search

In addition to pulling together research materials online, you will need to set aside some time for offline searching where you are making appointments with doctors for a consultation and mapping out exactly what you want and expect.



Interviewing Surgeons

Being an informed patient means taking some time to meet with at least three or four different doctors that specialize in the same area and comparing their options side by side. You want to get a sense of the physician's style, level of professionalism, experience, and skill level. You need to seek out only licensed and reputable physicians that appear to make their patients a high priority and are willing to take the time to learn about your goals. You also want to see how they explain what results you might expect with your particular procedure based on your age, lifestyle, genetics, and skin type. Look for a surgeon who is not acting like a salesperson but more as a trusted guide. You never want to be pressured into any type of procedure or pay extra for services that you don't offer any extra benefits to you.

You also want to learn about the process of handling a botched procedure. Since there is always a risk that the surgery goes wrong, you need to know that you will be in trusted hands for corrections or have some sort of plan to manage a negative outcome.

Collecting and Sharing Photos

Pulling together photos of celebrities and images of faces and body parts from magazines may not be the best way to share your goals. Since many of these images have been photoshopped, there is a good chance that even the most skilled doctor would not be able to replicate the same dimensions or shape.

You want to be as realistic as possible when presenting photos so consider pulling photos from sites like RealSelf.com or even other physician's websites. You can always use photos as inspiration or a guide but remember that it's almost impossible to duplicate even a real-life result.

BEING REALISTIC ABOUT RESULTS

Having realistic expectations about the outcome of cosmetic surgery is often one of the biggest challenges a patient faces as they go through this journey. While it's a good idea to be positive and even be inspired by another physician's work or a cosmetic surgery success story, it's always important to remember that your results will be unique to you.

It is extremely difficult for any physician, regardless of credentials, skills and experience, to replicate the results of another procedure — even their own. Since every patient has a different body composition, genetic makeup, skin type, and healing speed, results can vary significantly from patient to patient.

Some things you can do to maintain realistic expectations about your results:

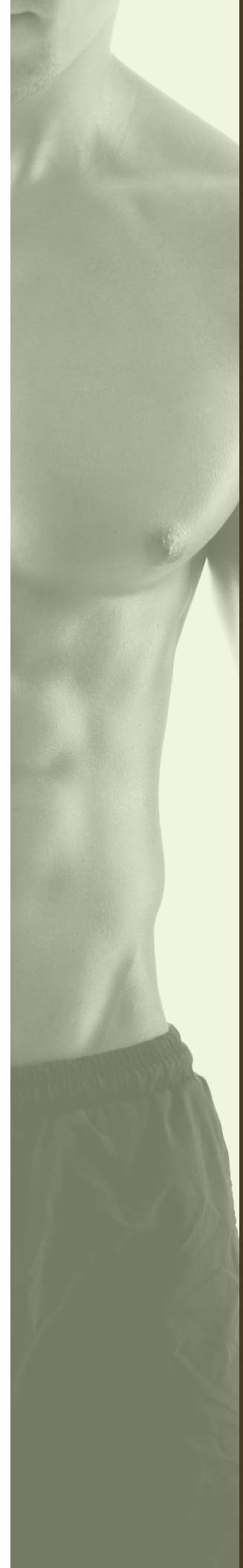
- Read stories and testimonials of patients who went through the same procedure and how they felt about their surgery both before and after treatment.
- Review dozens, if not hundreds of real-life before and after photos of patients of a similar height, weight, and body composition as you.
- Don't rely solely on media images and magazines to define your goals
- Ask for insights and recommendations from trusted family and friends

Options for Improving Results

If you are not 100 percent satisfied with your outcome after the full healing period is complete, you may have the option to improve your outcome with aesthetic treatments and non-surgical procedures that enhance the procedure.

For example, many patients who undergo liposuction end up getting VelaShape or other body contouring procedures to help smooth out the skin and improve contours. You may be a good candidate for laser facial treatments after undergoing facial plastic surgery that has left some visible scarring. Chemical peels or laser skin resurfacing treatments may be appropriate for lightening pigmented areas after surgery and improving the appearance of scars.

Your doctor can recommend a series of cosmetic enhancements and alternative procedures to complement your surgical procedure.



FINDING THE RIGHT SURGEON FOR YOU

Many first-time patients don't realize that any physician that has performed cosmetic procedures can call themselves a 'cosmetic surgeon'. And, unfortunately, some do. If you want to make sure you are working with a highly trained physician who has extensive experience performing the procedure you are interested in, you need to make sure the physician is board-certified.

Board certification from the American Board of Plastic Surgery or American Society of Plastic Surgeons verifies that the surgeon has completed a specialized educational program and has extensive experience. It's a qualifier of skilled physicians on your search for the best and something you simply cannot overlook.

Where to Find this Information

All reputable physicians will list board certification information and their credentials on their website and in all of their marketing materials. They may have certificates hanging in their office and images of these certificates posted on their website.

You can also use online tools like www.certificationmatters.org to check for board-certification free of charge.

The American Board of Physician Specialties also has an online tool that provides online certification confirmation at no cost.

Other Ways to Verify Credentials

Some other ways to verify credentials and experience include:

- Asking your doctor where they went to medical school
- Determining whether the doctor has hospital privileges
- Learning about professional organizations and medical societies the doctor is affiliated with
- Asking about any other accomplishments or major success stories the doctor wants to share

THE SURGICAL CENTER

In many cases, you will undergo your procedure in an ambulatory center rather than an actual hospital. Only some board-certified physicians perform surgery out of a hospital because hospital fees can be significantly higher and it may be difficult to schedule a procedure. The majority of cosmetic procedures are performed on an outpatient basis in a private setting. The cost of treatment at these venues will depend on your procedure, anesthesia, insurance and surgeon. Here's what you need to know about outpatient procedures:

About Ambulatory Centers

Most ambulatory settings are modern, clean, facilities that are designed for the convenience of the patient. They are less expensive than hospitals to maintain and can be more aesthetically pleasing than the typical hospital room.

Look for ambulatory centers that are accredited by a reputable organization and comply with modern safety procedures. Accrediting organizations include the American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities (AAAASF), the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) and the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC).

Staff at the Surgical Center

Your surgeon may work with a board-certified anesthesiologist, nurses, and assistants during your procedure. You will be introduced to these individuals before your anesthesia is administered and most likely will not remember them after your procedure. If you are undergoing cosmetic surgery under local or general anesthesia, you may remember interacting with the recovery room nurse as you start to wake up.

These staff members are always there to monitor you and make sure you are comfortable during treatment. You can turn to them for anything you might need before and after treatment.



MANAGING THE COST OF COSMETIC SURGERY

For many patients, cost is one of the biggest concerns when undergoing cosmetic surgery and you may be wondering whether you will need to finance your procedure. While many procedures do cost a few thousand dollars, you will not know what your bottom line cost will be until you set up a consultation with a surgeon. Every surgeon charges different fees and costs vary significantly by location.

RealSelf.com can be a valuable tool for patients who want a ballpark range of the cost of their procedure based on city and state. You can compare costs across the country to see if the surgeon you are considering is offering a fair price.

Factors Influencing Cost of Procedures

- Surgical method and technique
- Ambulatory center
- Anesthesia used
- Staff
- Doctor's fees
- Post-surgery garment fees

The cost of your procedure may be higher than the average if you are not in the best physical condition or the doctor will need to use certain specialized techniques to achieve the best possible outcome. In some cases, the doctor will need to perform complementary procedures together and extend your treatment time.

Additional costs to keep in mind include: pre- and post-surgery supplements and garments; transportation costs to and from the surgical center; and treatment of any medical complications or health issues that arise because of the procedure.

Understanding How Insurance Works

Insurance companies typically do not cover elective procedures, such as cosmetic and plastic surgery, but will cover reconstruction procedures and surgeries performed for medical reasons. If your decision to undergo surgery is purely cosmetic, you can expect to be paying for all of your expenses out of pocket. Still, it doesn't hurt to check in with your insurance and see if they offer any type of coverage for your particular procedure.

Financing Your Procedure

Many patients find it simply makes sense to finance their procedure. Whether you turn to credit cards or use third-party financing plans like CareCredit, you may find it easier to cover the cost of treatment with a low monthly payment plan. We can provide more information about third-party financing and loans during your consultation.

Personal Loans for Cosmetic Surgery

Some patients choose to get a personal loan to cover all procedure expenses. If you have great credit and qualify for an attractive loan offer from your bank or other financial institution, this may be the most affordable way to manage cosmetic surgery costs. You might also get a loan from a trusted friend or family member and set your own terms for paying them back.

Budgeting for Cosmetic Surgery

If you don't want to take out a loan or get third-party financing, you will need to reorganize your budget to pay for your procedure in full. Keep in mind you may qualify for a discount if you agree to pay in cash so this can bring down your overall costs. You can start saving for your procedure several months before treatment so that you don't even have to consider a loan. Think of ways to cut out some of your discretionary expenses and adopt some better spending habits so you have more available for your savings fund. Even a few hundred dollars a month can help you save as significant amount in a few months. Consider getting a temporary part-time job or asking for a raise to bring in more income.



YOUR CONSULTATION

When you have selected a doctor and want to explore your options, you can schedule a private consultation where you will meet the doctor, review your goals together, and get the chance to ask questions about your procedure. This is the perfect time to share photos of what you are looking for and share what you discovered during your research. This is also a good time to learn about all available options at the practice, including any non-surgical aesthetic treatments that could enhance the results of your procedure.

What to Bring to Your Consultation

You will need to share some information about your health and medical history so the doctor can determine whether you are a candidate for the procedure. If you can bring a list of medications, a list of recent surgeries and medical treatments, and any other health-related information, the doctor will have a more accurate idea of the status of your health. It's also a good idea to bring along:

- Insurance cards
- Photos of your goals
- List of ideas of expectations

Key Questions to Ask During Your Consultation

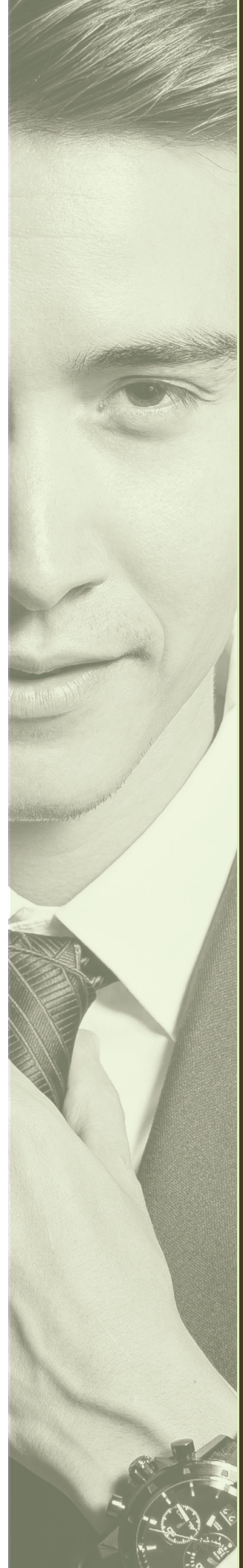
Your consultation is your time with the doctor to determine if he or she is a good fit for you, and what you can expect as a patient at the practice. Some of the key questions to ask during your consultation include:

- How many procedures have you performed to date?
- Can you share information about any botched procedures or serious mistakes? How were these handled?
- Are there any patients that I can reach out to for a reference?
- What techniques should I know about?
- Where exactly will you be making incisions?
- Will I have dissolvable or removable sutures?
- What type of anesthesia will you be using? Do I have a choice?
- What are the common side effects of this procedure?
- What are all the risks involved with this procedure?
- What can I do to minimize risks and complications?
- What happens in the event of an emergency?
- What can I expect during my recovery period?
- What happens if I'm not happy with my results?
- How do you handle touch-ups or revision surgery?
- What activities will I need to avoid after treatment, and for how long?
- Is there anything I could do to interfere with optimal results?
- Should I be making any changes to my diet or lifestyle before and after the procedure?
- What's the typical success rate for patients like me?
- What should I plan on for follow up visits?
- Are there any long-term side effects I need to worry about?

After Your Consultation with the Surgeon

After you meet with your doctor, you may be directed to the office manager or patient care consultant who will review the doctor's recommendation with you and outline the treatment plan. The treatment plan will include a list of all fees, including surgeon's fees, anesthesia fees, and garment fees. We will also share the average costs of any supplements and other items you may need to purchase on your own to ensure an optimal recovery.

This brief meeting is another opportunity to ask questions about what to expect and see your total costs. You can discuss your budget and find out what types of financing options may be available to you to help cover the costs of your procedure.



HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR PROCEDURE

You want to achieve the best possible outcome with your cosmetic surgery procedure and minimize all risks and complications. Since every patient has a unique experience, it's important to be aware of the potential risks and take steps to minimize these risks with appropriate lifestyle and diet adjustments, supplementation and even schedule changes to accommodate for recover

You need to be in good physical health to ensure you heal and recover as quickly as possible. If you have a compromised immune system, suffer from an auto-immune disease, or have any other health issues, these can delay healing. Making recovery a higher priority until your procedure can benefit you in a number of ways.

Here are some other things you can do to prepare for your procedure:

Stop Smoking

Smoking restricts blood vessels which can make it very difficult for your body to heal properly after a major procedure. Your doctor may advise you to quite smoking about a month before surgery so that your circulation improves and you reduce the risk of serious surgical side effects.

Avoid Certain Prescription Drugs

Your doctor will need to know about all prescription drugs you are taking and will tell you which drugs you need to discontinue for days and weeks before your procedure. These may include aspirin, aspirin-containing products, anti-inflammatories and Ibuprofen.

Avoid Certain Supplements

Many herbal supplements, including vitamin E and St. John's Wort, can affect your body's ability to heal. Vitamin E, for example, can increase your risk of bleeding. St. John's Wort may interact with medications used during surgery and should be eliminated from your daily intake for at least two weeks prior to surgery. Your doctor will provide you with a list of herbal supplements that you will need to stop taking leading up to your scheduled surgery.

Make Transportation Arrangements

You will need someone to drive you to and from the surgical center. Make these arrangements ahead of time so you can focus on other things on the days leading up to your procedure.

Set Up Your Home Recovery Space

You may not be able to move much for a few days after your procedure so take some time to set up recovery areas around your home and keep things organized and within easy reach. You may need someone to stay with you for at least a few days after surgery until you can move around freely.

Prepare Easily Digestible Meals

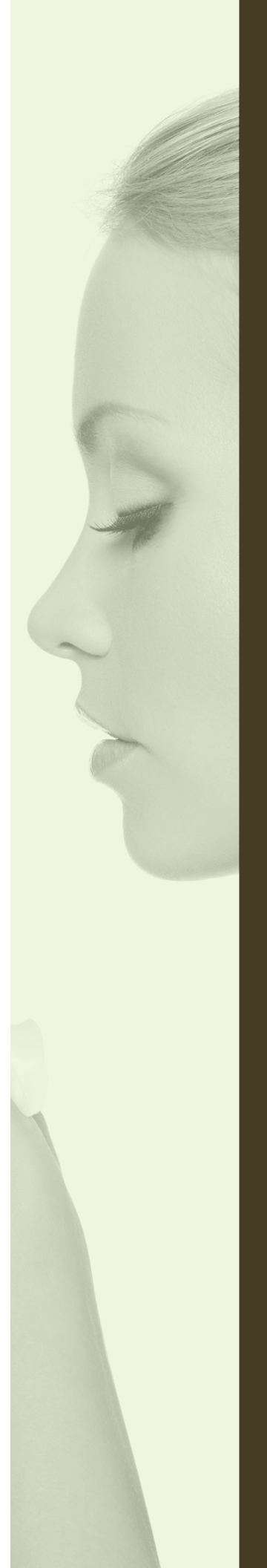
You may not have much of an appetite after the anesthesia wears off and you start to feel more like yourself after surgery. Stock your fridge and freezer with some healthy, nourishing and easily digestible meals so you don't have to worry about being too hungry. Remember that you need to feed yourself properly after surgery so your body can heal. If you have a sensitive stomach, this is not the time to try any new foods or eat anything too spicy.

Line Up Some Activities at Home

You may be confined to your bed or a chair for most of the days after a major procedure. Line up some of your favorite DVDs, books, magazines, and even craft projects to keep yourself occupied during those first few days of healing.

Have Emergency Contacts Within Reach

Create a list of emergency contacts that you could reach out to if you needed someone to come over and help you or just needed someone to talk to if you are home alone for a few days. Have this list easily accessible in your phone or post the list on your fridge so you don't have to search for the phone numbers.



UNDERSTANDING POTENTIAL FOR RISKS & COMPLICATIONS

Your doctor will discuss all of the potential risks and complications associated with your procedure. While the chances of mistakes are relatively low when working with a board-certified surgeon, you still need to be informed about possible problems and learn about all pre- and post-operative instructions.

You may be asked to change your diet, refrain from taking certain medications and supplements, and avoid certain activities after your procedure. If you are undergoing any type of body contouring or facial contouring procedure, you will need to wear a compression garment for several days and weeks after surgery. We will give you a list of instructions that you must follow in order to ensure a smooth recovery.

Tips for Managing Scars

Many patients are concerned about scars. Any time we make an incision, there will be a scar but we do whatever we can to make incisions in discreet places so they are easy to hide. Scars heal at different rates and some people may be at risk for developing keloid scars that require additional treatment. We encourage you to monitor the appearance of your scars as they heal and report any major changes. It's also important to keep in mind that it can take up to two years for a scar to heal completely so you may see changes up until that time.

Tips for Managing the Recovery Process

Your recovery begins right after surgery ends and you may need to be in the care of a trusted friend or a nurse for 24 to 48 hours after your procedure. Here are some things you can do to manage the recovery process:

- Keep your compression garment or bandage on for the full duration of your procedure to minimize swelling
- Stay out of the sun and make sure to wear sunblock from head to toe even when you are indoors
- Follow the doctor's instructions on when you can resume physical activities, shower, wear makeup, and perform light housework
- Eat a well-balanced diet and drink plenty of water to promote a healthy recovery
- Get plenty of sleep so your body can heal quickly during the regenerative sleep cycle
- Come in to the office for your scheduled follow up visits

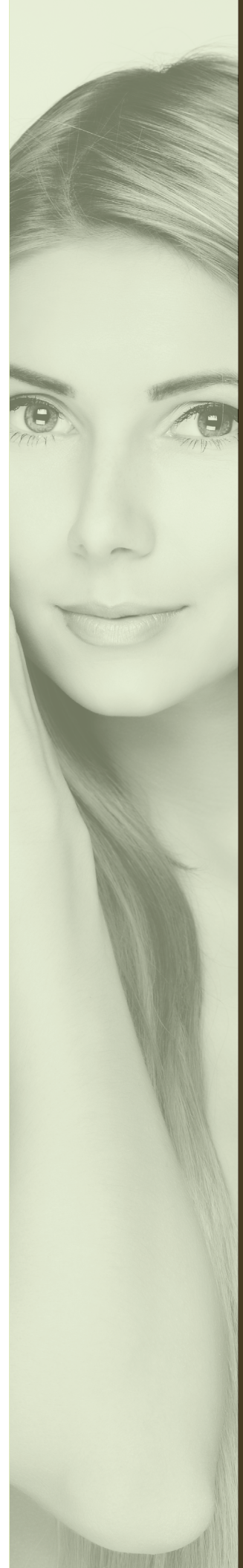
MAINTAINING YOUR COSMETIC SURGERY RESULTS

It can take a few months for your body and facial tissues to adjust to the effects of the procedure so you need to be patient. The swelling may not subside for a few weeks so it can be difficult to assess the outcome before that time. Once you do see the full result, it is your responsibility to take better care of your body so you can be the healthy, strong and vibrant version of yourself that you set out to be.

We believe cosmetic surgery is an investment in yourself and can trigger many positive changes in your life. You may feel more self-confident, look years younger, and appear more attractive to the opposite sex. This can help you enjoy a better quality of life overall.

Here are some key things you can do maintain results from your procedure:

- **Prevent sun damage.** Excessive sun exposure will break down collagen which in turn increase the risk of skin sagging and wrinkles. You may develop sun spots that can only be removed with laser treatment and ongoing skin lightening therapies. Excessive sun exposure also increases the risk of skin cancer so you need to be even more careful about protecting your skin — and your scars — with regular application of sunscreen.
- **Drink more water.** Staying hydrated will help you maintain a youthful, vibrant glow. Dehydration can make you look tired and will exacerbate the signs of aging. Drink at least 8 to 10 cups of water a day and even more if you exercise regularly.
- **Maintain a healthy diet.** Pay attention to the quality and quantity of foods you eat throughout the day so you aren't eating foods that will increase blood sugar levels, increase inflammation in the body, or make you gain weight. Eat well-balanced meals with lots of leafy greens, lean proteins, and healthy carbs to feed your body the nutrients it needs.
- **Manage stress effectively.** Being chronically stressed out can take its toll on your adrenal system and your heart. Practice yoga, meditation and engage in stress-relieving activities regularly for both body and mind benefits.
- **Get enough sleep.** Stick to a regular sleep schedule and make sure you are getting quality sleep every night. You will not only wake up feeling refreshed but your body and skin will be able to heal and regenerate properly night after night.



- **Manage your weight effectively.** Weight gain can compromise your cosmetic surgery results but you will want to avoid overexercising, diet pills, or any other harmful practices in an effort to lose or maintain a lower weight. Get plenty of exercise and eat a healthy diet to maintain a weight that is right for you.

You may be required to come in for follow up visits during the first month after your procedure and then in subsequent months so we can assess how well you are recovering. We may take 'after' photos at regular intervals after your surgery to store in our files and can share these with you for your records.

If you feel that you need a touch up procedure or want to explore non-surgical treatment options to enhance results of surgery, we can schedule another consultation to review options.

Our goal is to make sure you are more than satisfied with the final result and feel confident about enjoying your new life ahead.

We hope you found our Cosmetic Surgery Guide to be useful. As you venture on your journey towards a new you, don't hesitate to contact us to schedule a consultation or simply to learn more about procedures we offer.

For more information please contact us at:

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