

How To Select A Plastic Surgeon

by Mark D. Epstein, M.D., F.A.C.S.



So you've decided to take the first step towards surgical enhancement or rejuvenation. You want to arrange a consultation with a plastic surgeon. How do you begin? Plastic surgery has now become extremely popular and mainstream. How do you make sense of the frequent advertisements and recommendations of others? I would like to

give the reader some guidelines as to how to proceed.

Board certification – The American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) recognizes 24 medical specialties, and the American Board of Plastic Surgery is one of them. All other boards with the words “plastic surgery” in its name are not boards recognized by ABMS. Some plastic surgeons, as I am, are certified by more than one (ABMS) board (i.e. general surgery) prior to receiving training in plastic surgery.

Specialty – Many physicians and other health care providers are performing cosmetic surgery with varying qualifications. There are weekend courses, preceptorships and other brief ways of “learning” cosmetic surgery. Only a physician trained in an accredited plastic surgery residency is formally trained in cosmetic surgery of the face, breast, body and extremities. If you choose a non-plastic surgeon for a cosmetic surgical procedure, inquire as to the qualifications of that individual to perform that particular type of procedure.

Recommendations – A recommendation from a friend or relative who has undergone a particular type of procedure can provide invaluable information. If possible, it is always helpful to take advantage of this recommendation. In our office, we often refer perspective patients to speak with our many happy patients.

Internet – Plastic surgery web sites contain a plethora of useful information. Spend time reading the factual content on the site. Is

it relevant and useful? Also, good quality before and after color photographs provide a unique opportunity to survey the quality of the surgeon's work. I am particularly proud of our website and I invite you to visit us at www.epsteinplasticsurgery.com.

The office and personnel – Is surgery performed in an office based surgical facility? Is the facility accredited? By what organization? We are very proud of the fact that we are accredited by JCAHO, the same organization that provides accreditation to hospitals. How were you treated on the telephone? Were the office personnel friendly, courteous and helpful? Did they make you feel special? Were you greeted properly? Were you made to feel at home? In our office, we pride ourselves on treating patients the way we ourselves want to be treated.

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The consultation – Was the surgeon warm and friendly? Did he/she spend adequate time with you? (A breast augmentation consultation in our office usually lasts at least 30 - 45 minutes). Did the surgeon perform a comprehensive physical examination? Was he/she able to understand your concerns and desires as well as propose and explain an appropriate plan of treatment? Did he/she listen to your questions? Did the surgeon make you com-

fortable about undergoing cosmetic surgery? Ask if he or she has patients that would be willing to speak with you.

Please feel free to have a complimentary consultation at our office. I promise that you will not be disappointed. I am committed to delivering the best cosmetic outcome possible. Furthermore, safety is a prime concern. We pride ourselves on performing cosmetic surgery in a highly individualized fashion within a warm, caring and nurturing environment. ♦

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