

Are You a Good Candidate for Cosmetic Surgery?

Good candidates for cosmetic surgery meet the following criteria:

- ✓ Close to their ideal weight (within 30%)
- ✓ Non-smokers
- ✓ Emotionally stable
- ✓ Have low stress
- ✓ Exercise
- ✓ Maintain a healthy lifestyle
- ✓ Drink less than 5 ounces of alcohol a week
- ✓ Limit caffeine

It is important to have realistic expectations and not expect cosmetic surgery to change your life. A good candidate accepts the disadvantages of plastic surgery, which include cost, inconvenience, discomfort, and medical risk.

If you do not meet each criteria, it does not mean you won't be a good candidate for cosmetic surgery. If you meet none of them, it's more likely your doctor may want you to make some lifestyle changes before surgery.

It is important to let your doctor know your complete medical history including use of:

- ✓ medications as well as aspirin and vitamins
- ✓ hormones
- ✓ herbal medications

These products can interfere with blood clotting or interact with medications used during surgery and could increase your surgical risk.

Questions to ask yourself:

- ✓ Are your expectations realistic?
- ✓ How will you handle unexpected results?
- ✓ Do you feel fully informed about the risks
- ✓ Do you have the time in your schedule for proper recovery time?
- ✓ Can you afford the cost of plastic surgery?
- ✓ Will the cost of the procedure add too much financial stress to your life?
- ✓ Are you hiding your plans from friends and family? This can create added stress.
- ✓ Are you having cosmetic surgery to please yourself or someone else?
- ✓ Do you have a support network to help you during recovery?
- ✓ Are you willing to ask for help?

Information from smartplasticsurgery.com



When You May Not be a Good Candidate for Cosmetic Surgery

People with the following health conditions are generally not good candidates for cosmetic surgery:

- ✓ Diabetes
- ✓ Hypertension
- ✓ Lung disease
- ✓ Heart disease
- ✓ High cholesterol
- ✓ Arthritis
- ✓ Emphysema
- ✓ Malnourishment
- ✓ Severe depression
- ✓ Obesity
- ✓ Smokers

All surgery has inherent risks, but if you have a health problem it makes it more likely there may be complications. If you are overweight your heart has extra stresses and surgery may not be advisable. If you smoke or drink heavily, you may not be a good candidate. Any and all health conditions should be discussed openly with your cosmetic surgeon so they can help you make the most informed decision.

Smokers who do choose to have surgery must quit for at least 2 weeks prior to surgery and remain smoke-free until at least 2 weeks after surgery, for proper healing and recovery. Smokers have a higher rate of infection, skin separation, skin death, and anesthesia complications. One major study found that the risk of losing a significant area of skin (also called necrosis, or skin death) due to poor oxygen supply with a facelift is **increased by 1500%** in active smokers.



Cosmetic Surgery Frequently Asked Questions

What is Cosmetic Surgery?

Cosmetic or Plastic surgery is a surgical sub-specialty that deals with the healing and restoration of patients with injury, disfigurement or scarring resulting from trauma, disease or congenital defects. It includes aesthetic, or cosmetic surgery to correct or rejuvenate facial and bodily features not pleasing to the patient. Derived from Greek, the word plastic means molding or giving form and does not refer to the use of plastic materials.

Who is the best candidate for cosmetic surgery?

In order to be considered for cosmetic surgery by any reputable physician or specialist, certain qualifications should be met. For instance, those considering plastic surgery should have realistic expectations about what the results of the plastic surgery will be. Reputable doctors will carefully explain the possible and probably outcomes of the selected procedure to help prepare surgery candidates. Those deciding to have plastic surgery also should have a positive self-image and be emotionally sound. Some physical limitations may also exist for some surgeries, so be sure to carefully discuss any pre-existing conditions with your doctor.

What procedures do plastic surgeons perform?

- ✓ Aesthetic (also called cosmetic) problems with the face, neck and trunk, including forehead, eyes, nose, ears, lips, chin, neck, breasts, abdomen, hips, buttocks, thighs, calves, arms, and skin.
- ✓ Congenital deformities of the hands and face, including clefts of the lip and palate.
- ✓ Benign (non-cancer) and malignant (cancerous) tumors of the head and neck, skin and soft tissues.
- ✓ Traumatic injuries of the bony facial skeleton and hand as well as soft tissue injuries of any part of the body.
- ✓ Surgery of the hand.
- ✓ Surgery of the jaw and facial skeleton.
- ✓ Any type of skin cover and replacement problems.
- ✓ All types of reconstruction following removal of cancer resulting in disfigurement of any part of the body including the face, breasts, trunk.

How do I know that I'll get a qualified surgeon?

Every Health Travel Guides network provider is vetted according to a comprehensive 9 step credentialing verification process. Many of the surgeons in our network have international reputations. For example, network physician Dr. Saldaña has perfected a wide variety of plastic surgeries including face lifts (specializes in mini-face lift), liposuction, breast enhancement, tummy tuck, and eye lift, among others. He has recently added laser equipment for the treatment of spider veins and other small markings. Dr. Saldana is fully bilingual (Spanish and English). He has maintained a private practice in Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery since 1993.

What can I expect during cosmetic surgery?

Each procedure and surgery is different. Most procedures, however, are done on an outpatient basis and will not require an overnight stay. For particularly extensive procedure, you may be required to stay overnight at the hospital or clinic where the surgery is being performed.

Anesthesia is also different for each procedure and can be altered according to patient preference. Some surgeries may require a general anesthesia, while others may require only a local anesthesia.

It is suggested that patients keep in mind that some discomfort can be expected for virtually any cosmetic surgery procedure. The amount of pain and/or discomfort is largely influenced by the extent of the procedure, personal pain threshold, and other factors.

Information from cosmetic-surgeryonline.com



Cosmetic Surgery Frequently Asked Questions (Cont.)

What questions should I ask before choosing a plastic surgeon to make sure he/she is qualified to operate on me?

Bringing a checklist of questions can help ensure the safety and quality of your procedure.

•**Where will you perform my surgery?**

Cosmetic plastic surgery is safely performed in an accredited office-based surgery facility or free-standing ambulatory surgery facility, or it may be performed in the hospital.

•**Do you have hospital privileges to perform this surgery?**

It is important to find out if the doctor has operating privileges in an accredited hospital for the procedure you are having. Before granting operating privileges, hospital review committees evaluate a surgeon's training and competency for specific procedures.

•**How many procedures of this type have you performed?**

•Also ask what training has been completed, especially in new techniques.

•**What are the risks involved with the procedure?**

There are risks with any surgical procedure. Find out what they are, how often they occur, and how they will be handled if they do occur.

•**What is the expected recovery time?**

Be sure to discuss postoperative restrictions on activity and typical time periods for resuming work.

•**What is your policy on surgical revisions?**

Some cases may require revisions to achieve the desired results. Find out about any costs for which you may be responsible.

•**How much will the surgery cost?**

Cosmetic surgery is generally not covered by insurance. Health Travel Guides will provide you with a comprehensive quote for the procedure including the surgeon's fee and fees for the surgical facility and anesthesia, as well as other necessary elements such as the preoperative physical and blood work, as well as travel and accommodation costs.

Health Travel Guides can also assist you in securing financing for your procedure.

At what age is it best to consider cosmetic surgery?

Most plastic surgery procedures are acceptable for any age. On occasion, it may be best for individuals in certain age groups to choose one procedure over another. But as a general rule, age is not a deciding factor in having plastic surgery. Instead, the physical characteristics one experiences generally guide the desire for plastic surgery.

Is a plastic surgeon a skin specialist?

Dermatologists specialize in skin, but the plastic surgeon has an equally important role of the treatment of benign and malignant tumors of the skin. The skills of a plastic surgeon are especially needed when large areas of the skin must be removed and replaced especially where disfigurement may result or when these areas are in conspicuous areas such as the face. Plastic surgeons also perform skin resurfacing techniques, for cosmetic purposes, in order to achieve healthier looking skin by reducing facial wrinkling and pigmentary changes of the skin.



[Cosmetic Surgery Frequently Asked Questions \(Cont.\)](#)

Will I have a scar after cosmetic surgery?

Scarring is inevitable of healing, however a very fine lined scar placed in the correct orientation may be virtually invisible. A plastic surgeon spends years trying to master techniques to place scars in the most desirable location. Plastic surgeons will try to make incisions in areas that will not show, like under undergarments or along natural creases. Scars will normally fade over time, but certain areas of the body such as the back and chest, produce more severe scarring regardless of the technique used for reconstruction and closure. The severity of the scarring varies from person to person.

Does cosmetic surgery involve skin grafting?

Skin grafting is only used when it is the best way of closing a wound or defect. A qualified plastic surgeon uses judgment to decide the best way of reconstructing a defect. A skin graft may appear to have poor color match and texture compared to the native skin, but with careful selection of a skin graft donor site these problems may be minimized.

What is rhinoplasty and nasal reconstruction?

Rhinoplasty, or nose reshaping, reshapes the nose to improve appearance, and it may also be used to alleviate breathing problems. Pain from nose reshaping procedures are surprisingly mild. A splint is usually worn over the nose and sometimes inside the nose for five to seven days. There may be some bruising around the eyes, but this usually clears up in one to two weeks.

Can I receive a second nose reshaping if the first surgery does not produce the desired result?

Sometimes a touch-up is necessary after a nose reshaping, but it is generally better to wait a year before any additional surgery is performed. This also allows the maximum time to see the final results of the surgery.

What aesthetic surgical procedures are performed to improve the aging face?

There are various degrees and stages of facial aging that can be caused by the natural aging process, heredity, and lifestyle choices. Plastic surgeons have undergone training to address all areas of facial rejuvenation. A face lift tightens and lifts the redundant skin in the face and neck. Additional procedures are available to improve the aesthetics of the forehead, eyes, mouth, chin and neck. Minimally invasive endoscopic techniques are also available. Fine wrinkles of the face may be best treated by skin resurfacing techniques, like laser resurfacing, chemical peels or other skin care treatments.

How is a face lift done?

During a face lift incisions are made in the hair line, temple region extending down in front of the ear and then around the back of the ear into the hairline. These incisions vary depending on the technique used by your plastic surgeon. Many plastic surgeons are well trained in more than one face lift technique. The skin of the face and neck is dissected into the cheeks and neck allowing it to be mobilized upward producing a tightening and smoothing result. Many plastic surgeons can now also tighten the muscular layers underneath the skin as well during a face lift procedure. Years of specialized training are necessary to safely perform this procedure. The results can be subtle or drastic depending on the condition of the facial area prior to the surgery and the desired results.



[Cosmetic Surgery Frequently Asked Questions \(Cont.\)](#)

Does a face lift leave scars?

Yes, but as with other scars plastic surgeons have been trained to place them in areas that are very inconspicuous. Your plastic surgeon will be able to show you exactly where your scars will be following your surgery. Normally your hair will cover up most of the scars and makeup can touch up any leftover marks.

How is excessive wrinkling and bagginess of the eyelids corrected?

Eyelid surgery can correct this condition. Excessive skin and fat may be removed from both upper and lower eyelid. Tightening of the lower lid may also be done in concurrence with this procedure. One to two weeks of bruising and swelling is expected from this procedure. Eyelid surgery may be done in combination with or separate from face lifts or other types of aesthetic surgeries of the face such as brow lifts to better proportion your facial features.

What surgery can improve the appearance of breasts?

Three common procedures are performed: breast augmentation, breast lift, breast reduction.

Augmentation mammoplasty is a procedure that can safely enlarge a small breast or increase an undesired size. Different techniques are used, but in general this is performed using a saline breast implant, after the FDA ruled silicone unsafe in 1992. Implants may be placed in different positions depending on the physical make-up of the patient and her breasts. The implant may be introduced through three different incisions: below the breast, around the nipple areolar complex, or in axilla (arm pit).

A breast lift is used when the patient is happy with the size of her breasts however due to aging and pregnancy the breast gland has begun to droop. Various techniques are employed to accomplish a breast lift and results are generally excellent.

Breast reduction is designed to make overly large breasts smaller. Patients seeking this type of surgery often have multiple severe physical symptoms secondary to their large breasts including neck, shoulder, back pain, paresthesia of the arms and bra strap grooving of the shoulders. The technique of breast reduction requires lengthy incisions; however, they may be placed in inconspicuous locations such as the fold underneath the breast. Typical symptoms of back pain, neck pain etc. are almost always improved after a breast reduction if not completely eliminated. This procedure is often covered by insurance.

Am I a good candidate for liposuction?

Liposuction is not used for weight loss, rather to correct problem areas or fat bulges. A candidate will be close to their ideal weight because a liposuction is typically performed in patients that have an area of fat they find hard to lose. The fat removed does not weight a lot, so patients should expect a shape change, not a weight change.

Do the results of liposuction last?

As long as the patient maintains a healthy life-style, including exercise and a sensible diet, liposuction results are long lasting. Once the fat cells have been removed from an area there is no longer a preferential fat storage area and any fat gain will be distributed more evenly over the rest of the body.

What areas of the body can be treated with liposuction?

The most common areas treated in females are the abdomen, hips, and thighs. Men are often treated for liposuction in the breasts, hips, and abdomen. Other areas may include the upper arms, under the chin and the buttocks.

Does liposuction leave scars?

Incisions made during liposuction are generally very small and put in areas that are more inconspicuous. Most cases of liposuction will heal well and it will be difficult to see where they were originally made.

Information from aboardcertifiedplasticsurgeonresource.com



What to Know Before Choosing Cosmetic Surgery

Fees and Insurance

Fees for cosmetic plastic surgery generally are paid prior to surgery. Costs vary widely and depend on the complexity of the operation, where the surgery takes place and which anesthetic is administered.

As a rule, cosmetic plastic surgery is considered "elective surgery" and is not covered by most insurance plans. Some operations that have a significant functional aspect - such as breast reduction, if the weight of your breasts causes pain or interferes with normal activities - may be considered reconstructive rather than cosmetic. Check with your plastic surgeon, who may recommend that your insurance company be contacted before surgery to determine whether coverage is available.

Surgical Facilities

Cosmetic plastic surgery is safely performed in an accredited office-based surgery facility or free-standing ambulatory surgery facility, or it may be performed in the hospital. If your surgery will be performed outside of the hospital, be sure that your doctor has privileges to perform the same procedure in an accredited hospital.

Risks and Complications

Cosmetic plastic surgery, like all surgery, has risks. Plastic surgeons perform thousands of successful operations each week, but as with any type of surgery, a patient can have an adverse reaction to the anesthetic or be affected by postoperative complications. These problems can occur even when the surgeon has performed the operation with the utmost skill. ASAPS believes that fully informed patient consent is essential to any medical or surgical treatment. Your ASAPS-member plastic surgeon is the best source of this information as it relates to your particular surgery.

Recovering from Your Surgery

For most cosmetic plastic surgical procedures, you will need to restrict your normal activities for a time following surgery. It takes time, as well, for the visible signs of healing to subside. Plan your work and social activities to allow sufficient time for recovery.



General Risks & Complications from Cosmetic Surgery

Every surgery, even minor, carries some risk. Be sure to discuss the possible risks and complications with your plastic surgeon so you feel fully informed before surgery.

Risks with any surgery

Anesthesia/Sedation Complications-Some patients have serious reactions to the anesthesia or sedation used during surgery. Most anesthetic complications occur with general anesthesia. Complications include:

- ✓ abnormal heart rhythm
- ✓ airway obstruction
- ✓ blood clots
- ✓ brain damage
- ✓ death
- ✓ heart attack
- ✓ malignant hyperthermia
- ✓ nerve damage
- ✓ stroke
- ✓ temporary paralysis

Airway obstruction: Anesthesia can sometimes irritate air passages, causing the vocal cords to spasm and this can block the airway. The anesthesiologist may need to insert a tube down the throat or cut into the windpipe.

Brain Damage: Brain damage can occur if blood circulation is depressed at dangerous levels.

Malignant Hyperthermia: This is a rare complication where body temperature, blood pressure and heart rate all rise to hyperactive levels. If not recognized and treated quickly, can lead to death. This may be inherited.

Temporary paralysis: This occurs if muscle relaxants have not fully worn off after surgery. It is easy to detect and easily treatable.

Patients who have heart trouble, lung disease or are obese are at greater risk of complications due to anesthesia. To reduce your risk, tell your doctor about any medications you are on and let her know your complete medical history.

Aspiration-Aspiration occurs if you vomit (aspirate) during surgery and the vomit is forced into the lungs. Aspiration can cause mild discomfort, and can also lead to infections, chronic cough, an obstruction in the lungs or pneumonia.

Blood Loss-Bleeding is normal with any procedure. However, if there is excessive bleeding, it can create major complications. If this occurs during surgery, your plastic surgeon and anesthesiologist will be aware of by pooling blood or by a blood pressure drop. If bleeding occur after surgery, it can accumulate under the skin and require an additional surgery. Discuss with your physician what you can expect as far as bleeding and bruising.

Blood Clots (DVT)-A blood clot in the veins can be fatal. Longer operating time and general anesthesia increase the risk of a DVT. They can occur as a result of a medical condition or from immobilization (which allows the blood to pool) such as pregnancy, international airplane flights, and recovery from surgery. They are difficult to predict. To help prevent them, during recovery do not stay in one position for too long and flex your feet often. Patients who have liposuction in their legs are at higher risk. Compression garments worn reduce the risk of DVT.

Drop in Blood Pressure-Some decrease in blood pressure is normal during surgery. However, a sudden drop due to blood loss could lead to irregular heart beat and possibly a heart attack.

Infection-The risk of infection is less than 1% and antibiotics reduce this risk dramatically. However, if infection does occur, it is very serious. People who smoke, take steroids or have certain vascular conditions are at greater risk. The longer your surgery lasts and the more blood you lose, the more likely you are to have an infection.

Loose Sutures-If the sutures come loose this can lead to internal bleeding or a hernia. Such problems would require additional surgery.



General Risks & Complications from Cosmetic Surgery (Cont.)

General Risks for Cosmetic Surgery

See specific procedures for more detailed information

- ✓ **Skin Death or Necrosis:** usually follows an infection or hematoma and is much more likely among smokers. The skin is excised (surgically removed) and this may affect the cosmetic outcome.
- ✓ **Asymmetry:** moderate or severe asymmetries may require a second surgery. Mild asymmetry is normal.
- ✓ **Slow Healing:** due to age, skin type, failure to follow doctor's advice or factors beyond anyone's control.
- ✓ **Numbness/Tingling:** often temporary, sometimes permanent loss of sensation. This results from injury to sensory or motor nerves.
- ✓ **Irregularities, dimples, puckers, and divots:** can be due to surgeon error, healing irregularities or body make-up.
- ✓ **Seroma:** fluid can collect under the skin and can occur after breast augmentation, liposuction or a tummy tuck.



General Pre-Op Steps for Cosmetic Surgery

Research your scheduled procedure for specific pre-op information.

Before Surgery:

- ✓ Do not take aspirin or anti-inflammatory medications
- ✓ If you smoke, quit smoking for at least 2 weeks pre-op (and anticipate no smoking for the recovery)
- ✓ Obtain a copy of your doctor's protocol
- ✓ Make arrangements to have someone drive you to and from the operation
- ✓ Arrange for someone to care for you the first 24-72 hours after surgery
- ✓ Fill prescriptions (especially pain medications and antibiotics) before surgery
- ✓ Consider a pill case with time chart for taking medications
- ✓ Purchase thermometer, antibacterial soap, dressings, gauze, etc.
- ✓ Purchase any homeopathic medicines (*Be sure to discuss this with your doctor*)
- ✓ Set up home recovery area: pillows, books, magazines, journal, stationery, T.V., remote control, videos, etc.
- ✓ Black out windows so you can rest during the day
- ✓ Have a whistle, bell, walkie-talkies or intercom system for requesting help
- ✓ Prepare and freeze meals for 2 weeks
- ✓ Consider stocking up on quick snacks: Protein shakes, soup, applesauce, jell-O, frozen dinners, yogurt, oatmeal, cottage cheese, juice (purchase flexible straws for easier drinking)
- ✓ Be sure to get adequate protein - the body needs it for proper healing
- ✓ Talk to your doctor about low-sodium foods to reduce swelling
- ✓ Prepare Icepacks (can also use packs of frozen veggies or fruit, gel packs, etc.) to reduce post-op swelling
- ✓ Have moisturizers, scar reducing creams and petroleum jelly on-hand for incisions
- ✓ Have laxatives available (pain medications are often binding)
- ✓ Have eye drops on hand (after any surgery, eyes can be dry)
- ✓ Consider arranging for a hand-held shower head and bathroom chair in your shower
- ✓ Place telephone with speaker phone near your bed
- ✓ On the day of surgery, wear loose clothing which will be easy to get off and on after the operation

Information from smartplasticsurgery.com



Cosmetic Surgery Recovery

Research your scheduled procedure for specific recovery information.

- ✓ Apply ice packs or compresses to minimize swelling
- ✓ Do not take aspirin or anti-inflammatory medications (your doctor can provide you with a list of OTC medications to avoid)
- ✓ Do not smoke or be exposed to secondary smoke during recovery
- ✓ Avoid exposure to direct sunlight
- ✓ Use a sunblock (minimum 15 SPF) to protect your skin
- ✓ Go to follow up appointments to reduce complications

First visit: Bandages usually removed. Stitches that are not absorbable will be removed after 3-10 days.

Return to work: 3 days-3 weeks.

Exercise: 2 weeks after facial surgery, 4 weeks after body work.

These are general guidelines. Talk to your doctor for your specific instructions.

