

Plastic Surgery Checklist



The popularity of plastic surgery is soaring—and more and more doctors are trying to meet the demand. Any licensed physician can call himself or herself a “cosmetic” or even plastic surgeon, so the importance of finding a properly trained and certified provider is paramount. We have prepared this checklist to help guide you through your plastic surgery procedure—from choosing a plastic surgeon to managing your recovery.

CHECK OFF EACH ITEM TO PREPARE FOR YOUR PROCEDURE:

1. Researching Your Procedure

From skin treatments to surgery, plastic surgeons provide a wide array of procedures. Research will help you narrow down the best options for meeting your goals.

Visit www.plasticsurgery.org for full descriptions of plastic surgery procedures and the results you can expect from each.

Consider other online resources such as BeautyforLife.com, and the Partnership for Patient Safety at www.p4ps.org. If you are interested in breast implants, also consider breastimplantsafety.org.

2. Choosing Your Plastic Surgeon

There are many ways to find a surgeon, including seeking recommendations from your primary care physician, friends, and family. But when you're ready to make a choice, be sure your plastic surgeon meets the highest standards of education, experience, and ethics.

Ask friends, family, and doctors for referrals.

Compile a list of plastic surgeons (we recommend choosing three to five candidates).

Make sure each candidate has at least six years of surgical training and experience, with a minimum of three years specifically in plastic surgery.*

Make sure each candidate is certified by The American Board of Plastic Surgery or The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.*

If you are considering a surgical procedure, make sure your surgeon has operating privileges at an accredited medical facility.*

Ask your candidates about their most recent continuing medical education.*

Look for this symbol:



* When you choose an ASPS Member Surgeon, you can rest assured that your doctor has all of these qualifications, which are the conditions of membership.

3. Consulting with Your Plastic Surgeon

Well before your procedure, you'll meet with your plastic surgeon for a consultation to discuss your goals and determine the best plan to achieve your desired results. The consultation is your opportunity to ask your surgeon tough questions. You should feel confident asking about your doctor's credentials, experience, outcomes and safety record in the type of procedure that interests you. It is your body, your safety and your decision.

During your consultation, you should accomplish the following:

- Confirm that you are a good candidate for your chosen procedure.
- Identify any alternative procedures for achieving your desired results and understand the pros and cons of each.
- Review before and after photos that illustrate the procedure and results that you can reasonably expect.
- Determine what will be expected of you to achieve the best results.
- Discuss the risks associated with your procedure and how your doctor handles them.
- Tell your plastic surgeon about medical conditions, allergies, and previous medical treatments. On the day of the consultation, it's helpful to bring a list of your medical conditions and any medications, vitamins, or herbal supplements you are taking.
- Find out who will perform your procedure and where—if a member of the doctor's staff will perform the procedure, which sometimes occurs with non- or minimally-invasive procedures, ask for qualifications.
- Determine the length of the recovery period and the kind of recovery help you will need. Plan for the appropriate level of support you will need from family and friends—such as a ride home from the hospital, help with changing dressing, or assistance in bathing—based on the type of procedure you are having.
- Share old pictures of yourself (from a time when you were most pleased with your appearance) with your surgeon to show how your appearance has changed.
- Discuss the cost of the procedure and any financing options.
- Understand your options if you are dissatisfied with your results.

4. Planning for Your Surgery

Safe and successful plastic surgery depends not only on your doctor; it's your responsibility too. These steps will help make sure you're ready for plastic surgery—both before and after your procedure:

Before

- Be sure you are physically healthy, eating right, and not smoking.
- Establish realistic expectations for the results of your procedure.
- Read, understand, and sign informed consent documents for your procedure.
- Understand the procedure's after-effects and recovery time.
- Have your plastic surgeon thoroughly address all of your questions about your recovery.

After

- Each procedure requires a specific post-operative protocol. Follow your doctor's orders for a safe recovery.

