

Checklist For Choosing a Surgeon



We have prepared this checklist to help guide you through your plastic surgery procedure—from choosing a plastic surgeon to managing your recovery. The popularity of plastic surgery is soaring—and more and more doctors are trying to meet the demand for this specialty that has become an integral part of mainstream medicine. Any licensed physician can call himself or herself a plastic surgeon, so the importance of finding a properly trained and certified provider is paramount.



We encourage you to do your homework: research the procedure, benefits and risks; have realistic expectations; be informed; ask tough questions of your surgeon; and most important, choose an ASPS Member Surgeon who has the necessary qualifications, training, and certification. We hope you find this guide helpful, and we look forward to serving as a partner on your journey.

CHECK OFF EACH ITEM TO PREPARE YOURSELF 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 aesthetic 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 UnderstandPlasticSurgery.com and medlineplus.gov. Patient safety information is available from the Partnership for Patient Safety, 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. Before selecting your surgeon, you should take the following actions to ensure that your plastic surgeon meets the highest standards of education, experience, and ethics.

- Ask friends, family, and doctors if they know of any plastic surgeons.
- Compile a list of plastic surgeons (we recommend 3-5 candidates).
- Make sure each candidate has at least six years of surgical training, 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 having a surgical operation, make sure it will take place in an accredited medical facility.*
- Ask each surgeon about their most recent continuing medical education.*

Look for this symbol.



ASPS Member Surgeon

* When you choose an ASPS Member Surgeon, you can rest assured that your doctor has all of these qualifications as well as training and experience in all plastic surgery procedures, including breast, body, face, and reconstruction, as these are the conditions of membership

3. Consulting with Your Doctor

Well before your procedure, you'll meet with your plastic surgeon for a consultation to discuss your goals and determine the best procedure 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 in which you are interested. 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 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.
- Find out who will perform your procedure and where—if a member of the doctor's staff will perform the procedure, ask for their qualifications.
- Discuss the length of the recovery period and the kind of recovery help you will need.
- Determine whether you will need to take time off work to recover and, if so, how much.
- Discuss the cost of the procedure and any financing options.
- Understand your options if you are dissatisfied with the outcome.

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:

Pre-operative

- Be sure you are physically healthy, eating right, and not smoking.
- Establish realistic expectations for the results of your procedure.
- Tell your plastic surgeon about your medical conditions, allergies, and previous medical treatments (including those that involve fillers, facial shaping, and Botox®). It does not hurt to bring a list of these conditions and any medications, vitamins, herbal supplements, or other drugs you have recently consumed with you on the day of the procedure.
- Read, understand, and sign informed consent documents for your procedure.
- Understand the procedure's after-effects and recovery time.
- Arrange for a responsible adult to care for you for at least 24 hours (or as long as recommended) after your procedure.
- Have your plastic surgeon thoroughly address all of your questions about your recovery.

Post-operative

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

