

# How to Choose the Right Cosmetic Surgeon for You

By: Jeffrey S. Poulter, M.D., FACS

We want to look as young as we feel, and today we can – thanks to new technology and break-throughs in cosmetic treatments. It's no wonder that cosmetic procedures for women and men are up 747 percent since 1997, with the fastest growth areas (11% since 2005) in the "Mommy Makeover" procedures (tummy tuck, breast augmentation and breast lift), according to an American Society of Plastic Surgeon's 2007 survey.

While 8 out of 10 cosmetic plastic surgery patients are satisfied with their surgical experience, nearly 40 percent believe they should have been more proactive. Some additional knowledge about their procedure may have improved their surgical experience and outcome.

If you are considering a cosmetic tweak, be sure to look into the credentials and experience of the physician performing the procedure. Some facial plastic surgeons, dermatologists and ophthalmologists may have had more than adequate hands on training in their residency programs. Others may not. Physicians outside the classic specialty areas may or may not have much  
*(Continued on back)*



*Before and after photos of Dr. Poulter's patient who had brow and eyelid lift procedures.*

## What do you know about your "cosmetic surgeon?"

1. Have they done surgical training especially in plastic surgery?
2. Do they have hospital privileges to perform your procedure?
3. Is their office accredited for safety?
4. Does their board certification require continuing education in surgery?
5. What is the physician's level of experience with the particular procedure being considered?

## Essential steps before plastic surgery:

1. Do your homework. Research the procedure, the benefits and the risks. Go to [www.plasticsurgery.org](http://www.plasticsurgery.org) for the latest information on plastic surgery procedures.
2. Have realistic expectations. Discuss your surgery with your plastic surgeon. What are your expectations? What do you need to understand about side effects and recovery time?
3. Be informed. Ask to talk to patients who have had your procedure. Ask to see pictures of results of other patients who have had the same procedure.
4. Don't inject anything into your body without the advice of a doctor.
5. When choosing your plastic surgeon, check for certification by the **American Board of Plastic Surgery**, the board-certification that indicates complete training in plastic surgery. You can check online at [www.abplsurg.org](http://www.abplsurg.org) or by calling 1-866-ASK-ABMS.
6. Many plastic surgeons with a focus on cosmetic surgery have earned membership in ASAPS (American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, Inc.).

---

experience performing the procedure that you are considering and it is rare to find one that is truly a sub-specialist in aesthetics. Increasingly, general practitioners are branching out into aesthetic non-invasive procedures including injectables, lasering, chemical peels and microdermabrasion.

By seeking the guidance of a surgeon who can provide the full gamut of care both conservative and surgical, you open your options to make an informed decision as to the best treatment for your condition.

The best advice is to be good to your skin and it can look great as long as you want it to. This means you'll need to maintain it. To get the best results from your cosmetic surgery, check if your surgeon is certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery, board certification that indicates complete training in plastic surgery. Cosmetic surgery can be life changing and extremely rewarding, but do your homework. Because after all, aren't you worth it?

*For more information you may contact Dr. Jeffrey Poulter at 309 692 6869 in Peoria Office, 309 663 1222 in Bloomington, or call toll free 888-841-4108. You may prefer to email [info@bodycontouringexperts.com](mailto:info@bodycontouringexperts.com). Visit [www.bodycontouringexperts.com](http://www.bodycontouringexperts.com) for additional information, before and after photos and videos of various procedures.*

**Resources for this article include:**

Lisa Lombardi, "Gynos Removing Wrinkles?"

[www.health.com](http://www.health.com)

The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery  
([www.surgery.org](http://www.surgery.org))

American Society of Plastic Surgeons  
([www.plasticsurgery.org](http://www.plasticsurgery.org))

Jim Leonardo, "High-profile tragedy prompts potential patients, media to do more 'homework,'" [Plastic Surgery News](#), February 2008