

Choosing DR. RIGHT

The past decade has brought dramatic advances in the aesthetic sciences that live and breathe, especially with the media's constant coverage of the topic. Turn a page or change a channel and you're likely to see an ad for a procedure or product that promises eternal youth. The focus is on everything from creams to injectables and, of course, lasers. We get it: you want to look as well as you feel.

Cosmetic surgery is both an art and a science.

The surgeon's own website is a great start, but is only part of the picture.

As you read and learn, beware of slick advertisements that appear to ignore risks and guarantee results. Since there is no board certification for cosmetic dentistry, for example, judge expertise by

evidence of success. Websites from accredited universities can be helpful. However, New York dentist Dr. Stephen Cho warns that individual practitioners' sites can be spun based as they are aimed more at marketing than information. Also, look carefully at the sites of top-notch schools and others that may indicate you're getting the degree and guidance of their graduates. For other appointments at university-based dental or medical schools are also good indications that the university has looked favorably at the credentials of the dentist or physician.

DON'T HESITATE TO ASK!

Least of all, ask about the practice before you call for a consultation. Atlanta-based plastic surgeon Dr. Theresa Jarman advises her patients seek the referrals from friends who have been pleased with work they've had done. It's also important to get the names of doctors whose work was not well received, she adds. She advises, "That someone's advice isn't an option, not to say because many people in the beauty and health industry have working relationships or referral systems."

Questions are a patient's best friend, suggests Dr. Naha, "A patient should ask how often the surgeon performs a particular procedure, what the alternatives are to the procedure, as well as the risks to the procedure. It is also important to know how long the recovery is expected to be." Dr. Brian Maloney, an Atlanta plastic surgeon, also recommends asking what type of cases a doctor specializes in and the full range of options.

Among other questions Dr. Maloney recommends: "What complications have you seen with this procedure?" "Do you have hospital privileges for these procedures?" and "What is your policy

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if things do not go as expected?" He also advises inquiring if the doctor has ever been sued for malpractice or has any cases pending. However, you may not be able to find out this information if the doctor has had litigation, but ended with the matter by settling, his or her payment.

Also, make sure you have a good understanding of the procedure you are considering, another helpful tip to cosmetic practitioners. I have always enjoyed working with patients who are knowledgeable about what constitutes good functional and aesthetic dentistry. Dr. Jarman agrees, "This should be considered an integral part of the interview process. There is a certain amount of homework each patient must do, it creates confidence with one's choice."

Dr. Cho adds, "I encourage patients to ask questions, take notes and maintain a journal, and to return for a second visit before making a final decision."

Don't hesitate to ask cosmetic surgeons with physician credentials until you find the best match, keeping in mind that both women and men will definitely play roles in your successful outcome. Dr. Cho considers second opinions helpful, but not always necessary and warns that "more than two opinions is often confusing." Dr. Naha agrees, "If a patient really has a call with the first surgeon they want and they are comfortable, then perhaps one consult is enough. Having said that, a second opinion can provide a patient with more options and perhaps clarify further any previously made recommendations."

THESE QUALITIES HEAVILY COUNT

When making a decision, you look for in your cosmetic dentist or plastic surgeon? Dr. Chermanshahian offers: "Knowledge, expertise, honesty and integrity." For Dr. Maloney, clinical competence should provide the first level of selection. He also prizes a combination of courtesy, compassion and passion for the work.

Dr. Cho agrees: "It is making



CHOOSING DR. RIGHT CAN BE A MAJOR PROBLEM FOR MOST PATIENTS UNLESS YOU DO YOUR HOMEWORK AND KNOW WHICH QUESTIONS TO ASK.

sureties. With this in mind, Dr. Jarman recommends choosing a physician, read in the latest publications and reviews. "Assessing training is equal, you need to find a surgeon who makes you feel comfortable saying what qualitatively bothers you and who honestly allows you to say what doesn't bother you."

Since cosmetic surgery is both an art and a science, there will remain the possibility that your aesthetic needs will not meet your expectations. "Even with properly performed surgery, revisions may be necessary," according to Dr. Jarman. In such cases, those interviewed for this article agree that one should return to the doctor who performed the procedure. Clearly explain your concerns, and come to an agreement on a plan for on to do so.

Dr. Maloney suggests that concerns can be expressed in a letter if communicating them face-to-face seems daunting. Dr. Naha offers patients who may have low confidence in their surgeon to seek a second opinion regarding additional options.

CHOOSE YOUR TEAMMATES CAREFULLY

Maybe the specialist you select will become a team player, another objective is your willingness. "I tell patients that they should not have their choice of physician on price," advises Dr. Naha. I would add that, when it comes to esthetics, the artist's skills, clinical training and years of experience of the practitioners should be major determinants in your selection. After all, there's a great deal at stake and you deserve nothing but the best results.



WITH A LIFELONG INTEREST IN FRONTIERS OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, DR. MALONEY HAS CONDUCTED THOROUGH RESEARCH ON THE PHYSICAL ATTACHMENT OF IMPLANTS AND ITS ROLE IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF OPTIMAL SUCCESS. HE HAS PUBLISHED AND WRITTEN EXTENSIVELY FOR BOTH COLLEagues AND THE GENERAL PRACTITIONER ON SUBJECTS SUCH AS BENTON, BENTON, BENTON AND BENTON. DR. MALONEY HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF DENTISTRY SINCE 1978 AND HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF DENTISTRY SINCE 1980. DR. MALONEY IS A MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF DENTISTRY SINCE 1980 AND HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF DENTISTRY SINCE 1980. DR. MALONEY IS A MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF DENTISTRY SINCE 1980 AND HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF DENTISTRY SINCE 1980.

Free plastic surgery advice that cost doesn't matter with up-to-date and accurate information about plastic surgery are the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery at www.asap.org, the American Society of Facial Surgeons at www.asfsurg.org and the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at www.aafpr.org.