

## **Checklist for Choosing a Surgeon**

How do you find a qualified plastic surgeon? Most people are not aware that anyone with a medical degree can call himself or herself a plastic or cosmetic surgeon, advertise those services and perform them. Your first consideration should be to develop a list of well-qualified plastic surgeons. Recommendations from friends or your family physician are a good starting point. Local hospitals can provide you with a list of board certified plastic surgeons with approval to perform the procedures you are considering. Board certification cannot guarantee great results, but it can certainly increase the odds.

The next step is to investigate your physician's credentials, such as board certification. If a physician indicates that he is board certified, make sure you question to which board he is referring. The American Board of Plastic Surgery (ABPS) is the only board recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties to certify plastic surgeons. A surgeon who is ABPS certified has graduated from an accredited medical school and completed at least five years of additional residency. After this, the surgeon must practice plastic surgery for two years and pass comprehensive written and oral exams. You can verify this information through [www.certifieddoctor.org](http://www.certifieddoctor.org).

After you have narrowed your list of candidates, consider asking these questions during the initial consultation: Do you do this procedure frequently or only occasionally and when did you last perform this procedure? What major hospitals and surgery centers are you affiliated with in the area? Could the surgeon show you various before and after photos of his other patients who had undergone the procedure you are considering? Did he candidly discuss the potential risks and complications associated with this procedure so you could make an informed choice?

After your consultation, think about this: Did the surgeon ask about your motivation or appearance goals? Were all your questions answered to your satisfaction? Did the surgeon welcome questions about professional qualifications, experience and cost? Did you feel comfortable talking with the surgeon about surgical and non-surgical alternatives? The physicians at ACPS have prepared the following check list to help you select the best plastic surgeon for your procedure.

The Aesthetic Center for Plastic Surgery's <i>Check List for Choosing a Plastic Surgeon</i>	ACPS	Non-ACPS Surgeons		
<b><i>To print and take with you on your consultations...</i></b>	SURGEON	#2	#3	#4
<b>THE SURGEON'S CREDENTIALS</b>				
Specializes mainly in aesthetic plastic surgery	YES			
Board certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery	YES			
<b>Member of:</b>				
American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS)	YES			
American Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ASAPS)	YES			
Fellow of the American College of Surgeons (FACS)	YES			
Fellow of the International College of Surgeons (FICS)	YES			
Additional credentials for continuing education from AMA, ASPS, ASAPS	YES			
Privileges at major area hospitals to perform the procedure of interest	YES			
Participates in continuing education for his/her specialty	YES			
Practice has an affiliation of several aesthetic plastic surgeons on site, offering daily opportunities for continuing education among peers	YES			
<b>THE CONSULTATION</b>				
Before and after photos	YES			
Computer imaging	YES			
Extensive pre-operative and post-operative educational materials	YES			
Actual implants and garments available to "try on" a new breast size	YES			
Fee quoted includes surgeon's fee, anesthesia, operating room, implants, post-operative visits with doctor, home visit by nurse	YES			
Extensive pre/post operative printed information for patient review	YES			
<b>THE SURGERY</b>				
On-site fully accredited surgery center	YES			
<b>If there is an on-site surgery center, check the following:</b>				
Accredited by AAAASF, Inc. (you can verify at <a href="http://www.aaaasf.org">www.aaaasf.org</a> )	YES			
Licensed by the State Department of Health	YES			
Licensed anesthesiologists to administer general anesthesia	YES			
Staffed by experienced individuals hand-picked by the surgeon	YES			
Overnight stay program for patients needing longer recovery care	YES			
<b>PATIENT CARE</b>				
Complimentary at-home nurse visits by a skilled plastic surgery staff member	YES			
Registered massage therapists on site to relax muscles and speed recovery	YES			
Comprehensive skin care program with doctor-referred products	YES			
Experienced esthetician providing skin care after facial surgery	YES			

## Other Considerations in Choosing a Plastic Surgeon

Surgeon: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Consultation: \_\_\_\_\_

Procedure(s): \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did the surgeon spend time with you discussing your motivations and appearance goals?
2. Is the surgeon experienced in performing this type of surgery?  
How many? When was the last time?
3. Did the surgeon answer all questions in a language you could understand?
4. Was the physician warm, caring and understanding?
5. Were reception areas and exam rooms clean and neat?
6. Were office staff friendly, professional and knowledgeable?

*Finally...Ask yourself how you felt after the initial consultation. The level of communication with your physician and his staff, as well as the confidence the surgeon inspires, are vital to the success of your surgery.*