

"MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE"

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"Doctor, I don't care what you do, but it has got to look natural!"

"I would never have done this if I knew it was going to look like this!"

"I don't look like me!"

"No one knows that I had this done, but many people have complimented me on how good I look and ask if I have lost weight or was working out."

"I now look as young and healthy as I feel and I have so much more confidence!"

"I feel more competitive now in the workplace and in social settings and my self-esteem and confidence have been renewed!"

After 25 years as a plastic surgeon, I have repeatedly heard the above incantations and many more. Unfortunately, many people spend more time evaluating different cars and auto dealers than they do evaluating their doctor's credentials. But even many who do research a physician's background find the information overwhelming and confusing. So how does one go about making the right choice?

There are some basic steps that one should consider even before going to a consultation for cosmetic surgery. One should ask themselves certain questions:

- What am I unhappy with and what would I like to accomplish with a procedure?
- How do I think this will change my life?
- What sacrifices will I have to make to achieve my desired end result (time, money, discomfort, "down time", etc)?
- Familiarize yourself with Medical Boards and Medical Specialties/Societies (see ABMS below)

And finally- How do I find the right doctor?

Any licensed physician (MD, DO, even dentists and psychiatrists!) can market and perform cosmetic procedures with little or no training. Even credentials alone are no guarantee.

Once you have defined what you desire to have done you should have the following general approach:

- Ask trusted friends or family, or if you desire to remain completely confidential, ask your family physician if they have any recommendations



- Make a list of potential physicians
- Evaluate the physician's credentials: (online or by calling the AMA, Local Medical or Specialty Societies, etc.)
- In what field of medicine were they trained?
- What are their board certifications?
- What is their present specialty designation?
- Do the procedures performed by the physician correlate to his specialty (is a gynecologist doing facelifts or a dermatologist performing breast surgery, etc.)?

Interview the doctor! Don't just go for a consultation and listen to all of the wonderful things that the doctor says he can do for you. Ask questions and listen to the answers! No doctor should be offended by questions (even those you think may be silly or show ignorance on your part). The doctor should begin with questions to you about your desires and goals, and only then should he tell you how he will address them. He should be informative about the procedure and explain in lay terms the procedure, alternatives (including doing nothing!), the potential risks and complications as well