

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE HAVING A COSMETIC PROCEDURE

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So, you've made the decision

that 2010 will be the year that you do something about that sagging chin, those increasingly noticeable wrinkles, or the hollowness around your eyes. Now, you must make the ever-important decision of choosing which physician will be the one to fix those inevitable occurrences as we age. Let's face it, choosing a doctor to improve your appearance isn't as simple as choosing a body shop for your car. There is as much variety among dermatologists and plastic surgeons as there is in any group of professionals.

There are a few critical elements to keep in mind when selecting the right physician for the job. You want the best results right? Then why not do a little research. Here is a list of ten

points to consider when selecting the right doctor for the job. We suggest that you make this your "Official Guide" before moving forward with that next procedure.

1. Experience: Choose a doctor with experience in the procedure you plan to have; in particular 5 years of experience is recommended. Check to see if they have articles published in scientific journals on the topic--a real plus.

2. Training. Make sure the doctor is board certified. The American Board of Dermatology, American Board of Facial Plastic and Plastic Surgeons indicates he or she has been properly trained. Be leery of doctor's from other specialties that have been trained only at weekend seminars.

3. Talent. You want an artist, not a technician. Ask to see pre- and post-op photos of other patients your doctor has done. Check out references from patients who underwent the same procedure.

4. Staff Experience. A doctor is only part of the medical experience; if you want an understanding of the "true" nature of the medical office, check out the staff. Ask how long they have been there. Quick turnover is a red flag; High turnover and untrained staff are clear indications to shop elsewhere.

5. Research. Doctors who conduct research are medical leaders. If you can find a doctor who tested the procedure or product before it received FDA approval or came into wide-

spread use, you'll have a doctor who is intimately familiar with all its benefits and possible drawbacks.

6. Peer Respect. A physician with experience and self-confidence has a responsibility to educate their peers. Ask if the doctor teaches other doctors in the procedure. If the answer is yes, you have found a real pro.

7. Respect for Patients. Your doctor should explain everything thoroughly and answer all your questions. You should not feel pressured to make a decision before you are ready.

8. Cost. Legitimate physicians explain all costs up front and are happy to provide a list of fees for services performed. Beware of deep discounts: You may be getting an inexperienced doctor

9. Honesty. The doctor should be upfront about what you should expect from the procedure and how long the results should last.

10. Safety. Ask where the procedure will be performed. You'll want a clean, sterile setting to reduce the risk of infection. Keep in mind that all medical procedures should be performed in a medical setting: having work done at a "Botox Party" at someone's house, or at the mall, is highly inadvisable. stb

For more information on what you need to know before having a cosmetic procedure contact Marta I. Rendon, M.D., Diplomate, American Board of Dermatology, Diplomate, American Board of Internal Medicine. 561-750-0544. www.drrendon.com



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