

plastic

SURGERY

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Today's society is focused on appearance. Starlets are Photoshopped within an inch of their actual appearance on magazines. Shows about weight loss and fashion disasters are prime time viewing. And beauty doesn't just affect romantic possibilities; it extends into other aspects of life as well. Studies have shown that employers are more likely to hire an above-average looking person than someone who isn't so attractive. Unsurprisingly then, there are people who take matters into their own hands and upgrade their bodywork. Some feel that cosmetic surgery played an important part in their achievements and success. Others are less happy with the results.

Starting in middle school, many of *Sarah Pruitt's* classmates teased her about the size and shape of her nose. "I used to be called 'Pinocchio' or 'big nose,'" *Pruitt* recalls. "It really bothered me and I felt really ugly because of it. I was always self-conscious. I rarely felt like I was pretty."

During her sophomore year of college, she decided that she wanted to have rhinoplasty—cosmetic nose surgery.

"Even though my family thought I looked great, they still supported my decision to have the surgery," *Pruitt* said. "They knew I wasn't comfortable with how my nose looked."

After the surgery, *Pruitt's* self-esteem increased significantly. She became more talkative and wore less makeup. The positive changes extended to both her professional and social life.

"After I had the nose surgery, I was more outgoing," *Pruitt* said. "I made new friends, because I felt more comfortable with myself. At work, my boss said he noticed an improvement in my attitude. He said that I seemed more confident with my ideas."

Sarah feels that her decision to have surgery led her to self-confidence and being successful in certain aspects of her life.

But every yin must have a yang.

*Connie** decided to have breast enhancement surgery when she was 21. She liked her body, but wanted a bigger chest.

"I thought that if my breasts were bigger, I would get more attention," *Connie* said. "I was hoping guys would notice me more than they did."

Connie got the surgery a few months after her consultation. The reaction she got from men was just what she wanted. "Guys were noticing me more and I was going on several dates a week," *Connie* said. "I loved it!"

Connie, now 32, is happily married and is working at a job that she enjoys. However, she is regretting her decision of having her breasts augmented. "I recognized that some of the attention I was getting was from guys that only wanted to talk to me for the wrong reasons," *Connie* said. "It would have been nicer to receive the attention for my own attributes, instead of the implants."

If you are considering plastic surgery, no matter what type, one of the most important factors to consider is the surgeon you choose. This process may seem a bit overwhelming, but surgery is a life-changing experience so it is wise to do your homework before making your decision.

One of the first things you can do to begin your process is to gather names of surgeons who would be considered good candidates. Friends who have gone through a similar surgery, a family doctor or nurse, local hospitals, the ASPS (AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PLASTIC SURGEONS), and advertisements are all great sources.

After gathering a preliminary list of doctors, the next step is to check credentials. You can obtain this information from some of the previously mentioned sources. Things to inquire about are training, board certification, hospital privileges, experience level and affiliations with professional societies.

Finally, after narrowing your list to two or three candidates, you should set up an initial consultation with each. This is a great opportunity to compare personalities, opinions and fees. Don't be afraid to ask questions. This is your chance to analyze and consider how each candidate answers your questions and explains the risks involved. The surgeon should answer your questions in a manner easy for you to understand. The doctor should inquire about your motivations and expectations and offer recommendations where appropriate. You should not feel pressured in any way. The surgeon should also make clear to you the risks involved, the cost of the surgery, if and when there will need to be follow-up or maintenance surgeries or procedures and make you aware of possible variations of the outcome of the surgery. **Q**

PROFESSIONAL POINT OF VIEW

The popularity of plastic surgery has increased dramatically over the last decade. Cosmetic surgery if done for the correct reasons can lead to greater self-confidence by changing appearance. The patient needs to be sure they are having cosmetic surgery for themselves and not for someone else. Certainly, having plastic surgery to repair a bad relationship or at the insistence of a relative or friend are not good reasons. This may often lead to cosmetic surgery that was not desired or with results that are unnatural. A good example of this would be breast implants which are much larger than desired. In the future this may not only lead to regret but may increase the risk of problems such as sagging. Obviously someone like your spouse should help you with your decisions and offer encouragement in your quest to have cosmetic surgery but you should make the final decisions. Remember self image is at the very heart of our being. The bottom line is cosmetic surgery should be done mainly for one person only – yourself.

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