

WHAT *YOU* SHOULD KNOW before UNDERGOING A COSMETIC MEDICAL PROCEDURE

As the quest for the perfect body and flawless face continues, many consumers have turned to spas, salons and walk-in clinics for cosmetic medical procedures at bargain prices. With the number of these facilities increasing, more consumers are influenced to believe that certain cosmetic procedures are easy, inexpensive and risk-free.


However, according to Dr. Susan Weinkle, president-elect of the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery (ASDS), "Consumers should be aware that lower prices do not mean equal training and treatment, and should be cautious that these discounted prices could put their health at risk as a result of the provider's inadequate training and lack of expertise."

Weinkle and the ASDS urge consumers to recognize that all cosmetic procedures are medical procedures that should be performed by a qualified

physician or under the close supervision of one.

"In many instances, dermatologic surgeons, who are properly trained and experienced in performing cosmetic medical procedures, are sought to correct the mistakes of inexperienced and unqualified practitioners," Weinkle explains.

Serious side effects, such as burns, infections, scars and pigmentation disorders can occur when consumers visit centers that do not specialize in dermatology yet perform treatments like laser hair removal, deep chemical peels, acne therapy and other procedures, says Weinkle.

"It's critical that consumers take precautions and understand that dermatologic surgeons with the experience and knowledge of the health and function of the skin should perform cosmetic surgery procedures," Weinkle says. 

The ASDS suggests consumers follow these tips before undergoing any cosmetic medical procedure:

CHECK CREDENTIALS

Research the physician before undergoing the procedure to ensure that he or she is board-certified. (To find a board-certified dermatologic surgeon, visit ASDS.net.)

DON'T RELY ON PRICE

If a procedure's cost seems too good to be true, it probably is. Bargain-priced treatments may end up costing you in the long run if they cause harm, need correction or are ineffective.

MAKE SURE A DOCTOR IS ON-SITE TO CLOSELY SUPERVISE

Most cosmetic surgery procedures should be performed by a physician. If the physician is supervising a procedure, make sure he or she is immediately available on-site to respond to any questions or problems that may occur while the procedure is being performed.

ASK QUESTIONS

Always ask questions no matter how minor your questions may seem. Good questions include:

WHO

will perform the procedure?

IS

this treatment right for me?

WHAT

if something goes wrong?

WHAT

procedures are in place to deal with an emergency?

WHAT

training does the staff have?

IS

this laser, device or technique appropriate for my skin type?

HOW

many of the procedures do you perform in a month?

MAY

I see before and after photographs?

Be sure your medical history is taken: Before undergoing any cosmetic surgery procedure, make sure the physician is aware of your medical history, including allergies to medications and previous surgeries.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO WALK AWAY

Trust your instincts. If it doesn't feel right, find a more reputable location.

For more information and to download a free pre-cosmetic surgery questionnaire, visit ASDS.net.

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