

Skin

EXPERTS

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EXPERTISE FOR THE *life* OF YOUR SKINSM

Stay Safe: Questions to Ask Before Cosmetic Procedures



Is a cosmetic procedure really a medical procedure?

YES! It's a popular misconception certain procedures are easy to perform and risk-free.

Selecting a physician with the requisite Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) training and experience in cosmetic medical procedures is the gold standard. These physicians have extensive knowledge about relevant anatomy and what questions to ask patients to assess the risk of potential complications that may be specific to the patient's medical history. Advanced knowledge of all the different procedures ensures greater patient satisfaction by allowing for a more individualized treatment plan to address cosmetic concerns rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. When patients visit untrained, unqualified practitioners, serious side effects – such as burns, infections, scars and pigmentation disorders – can occur. Certain procedures can be performed by qualified, trained medical professionals under the direct and on-site supervision of a physician. However, the physician needs to be on-site should something go wrong, and patients should feel comfortable in taking this precaution for their safety.



What should I ask before my procedure?

Be sure to get answers to these five important questions:

- Is this the right procedure for me?
- What should I expect from the procedure?
- What are the risks of the procedure?
- Who will perform the procedure?
- What happens if there is a complication as a result of the procedure?



What should the physician ask me?

Before the treatment, you should be asked for your complete medical history.

You should be asked about any chronic medical conditions you may have, what medications you are on (including over-the-counter medications and herbal supplements) and any allergies you may have. You also should be asked about your tendency to scar or develop changes in pigmentation of your skin after trauma or inflammation.

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Is there a doctor in the house?

Salons and medical spas (often called med spas) offering laser treatments and other cosmetic procedures can be

non-medical facilities staffed with non-physicians who are not qualified or properly trained. Some physicians receive a fee from med spas to rent their license so the business may engage in the practice of medicine. Remember: A physician needs to be on-site should something go wrong. Patients should ask that a doctor be on the premises to oversee the procedure before having it performed.



How do I find a good deal?

Don't make a choice based on price! Many med spas and salons offer discount coupons for procedures being

performed by non-medical personnel. These treatments require training and experience to achieve optimal results. Saving money could end up costing you a lot more in the long run if a complication occurs. The real value in terms of expertise, options and skill – all that board-certified dermatologists have to offer – is well worth the investment.



What is all this alphabet soup?

A recent truth-in-medical-advertising survey conducted by the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery

Association found only 33 percent of adults understand medical title abbreviations. These designations indicate the person's training, credentials and level of licensure. Here's a quick guide:

BSN – Bachelor of Science in Nursing

CMA – Certified Medical Assistant

CAN – Certified Nursing Assistant

DC – Doctor of Chiropractic

DDS – Doctor of Dental Surgery

DMD – Doctor of Dental Medicine

DNP – Doctor of Nursing Practice

DO – Doctor of Osteopathy

LPN – Licensed Practical Nurse

MD or DM – Doctor of Medicine

MPH – Master of Public Health

ND – Doctor of Naturopathy

NP – Nurse Practitioner

PA – Physician Assistant

PA-C – Physician Assistant Certified

PD or PharmD – Doctor of Pharmacy

RN – Registered Nurse



May I see your credentials?

Many med spa personnel wear white lab coats. This does not mean they are qualified to perform medical

procedures. Check the credentials to be sure the doctor performing or overseeing the procedure is board-certified in dermatology or another specialty with equivalent training and experience. Ask whether they belong to a medical specialty organization.



Who is a skin expert?

Members of the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery are board-certified in dermatology and are trained and experienced in both surgical and minimally invasive treatments to improve the health, function and beauty of your skin. ASDS members have training and expertise in a variety of skin rejuvenation techniques – from chemical peels and laser treatments to body sculpting, soft-tissue fillers and wrinkle-relaxing injections. Find a dermatologic surgeon near you at asds.net.