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Considering Plastic Surgery? Make Sure Your Plastic Surgeon IS a Plastic Surgeon

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(HealthNewsDigest.com) - If you are considering plastic surgery, make sure you do your homework. You may learn that the person you thought was a plastic surgeon is not, in fact, a plastic surgeon. Instead, that doctor may be a "cosmetic" or "aesthetic" surgeon. What's the difference?-- Many years of surgical training in which that doctor obtained the knowledge, experience, and skill to deliver the results you desire.

To perform plastic surgery safely, it requires years of training and experience. Plastic surgeons have a minimum of six, and most have eight or nine, years of training after medical school to be able to deliver the quality care and beautiful results you desire. This training allows them to handle challenging cases such as revisions and those with abnormal anatomy.

You would think the law would protect citizens from having healthcare professionals practice outside of their field of expertise. Would you be surprised to learn that any doctor can call himself or herself a cosmetic surgeon? No training or credentials are required other than a medical degree; sometimes not even that. Would you believe that dentists are performing BOTOX[®] Cosmetic and injecting facial fillers? In New York, some oral surgeons, who are subspecialists in the field of dentistry, want to perform facelifts. Why would these dentists try to perform these procedures? You may want to ask them...Why would patients consider having these doctors operate on them? In most cases, it is because they can offer one thing many plastic surgeons cannot: low price. Like most things in life, you generally get what you pay for.

Your plastic surgeon has no desire to drill your cavity or pull your wisdom teeth. If he/she did, there would be a lot of funny looking smiles out there. Guess what may happen if dentists start performing plastic surgery. There may be some funny looking faces out there. Worse yet, some of those faces may have significant problems, some of which cannot be completely corrected. This is not to incriminate all oral surgeons. There are a select few, some of whom also completed training in plastic surgery, who perform competent work and get beautiful results. However, they are the exception – not the rule. We all know the press and internet are filled with horror stories of cosmetic procedures gone wrong. Of course, complications can occur even in the best of hands.

To protect the public, it is my opinion that oral surgeons who are not physicians (meaning they do not possess an M.D. or D.O. degree) and have not completed plastic surgery training should not be performing plastic surgery procedures. If they desire to do so, I would encourage them to complete the requisite educational process to obtain the proper credentials to do so. Trying to circumvent this process by having New York State lawmakers pass a bill (<http://open.nysenate.gov/legislation/bill/S3059-2011>) stating they can perform these procedures without these credentials may very well put the public at risk for significant harm by having healthcare professionals perform procedures in which they lack the knowledge, training or skill compared to the procedures which they have spent years performing in their field of expertise.

How can you minimize your risk of running into problems? Make sure your surgeon is board certified in plastic surgery (not just board certified in an unrelated specialty) and he/she specializes in the area in which you want plastic surgery. Just because your friend's plastic surgeon performed an amazing breast augmentation does not mean he/she is the right surgeon for your nose job (rhinoplasty). Make sure your plastic surgeon has hospital privileges for the procedure in which you are interested and operates in an accredited facility. Ask to see before and after photos and speak with patients on whom the plastic surgeon has performed the procedure in which you are interested. If your plastic surgeon has an academic appointment and teaches other doctors, that is a bonus. Make sure you feel comfortable with the plastic surgeon. If your surgeon tells you these things are not important, necessary, or available; look elsewhere.

Still not convinced? Do you honestly expect to get a filet from a diner which is as good as the filet you get from a steakhouse? Then why do you expect to get the same quality plastic surgery from someone who spent a weekend at a cosmetic training

seminar compared to someone who spent many years training to master the knowledge and skill set required to become a plastic surgeon?

Remember – you only get one body and one life. It is always harder and more expensive to try to correct problems than it is to get it right the first time. You should also know that sometimes it is impossible to correct deformities resulting from improperly performed procedures. At the end of the day, do your homework. You'll be glad you did when you look in the mirror after your procedure.

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