



What's up doc?

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT PLASTIC SURGEON FOR YOUR NEEDS

BEFORE YOU UNDERGO any procedure, it's important to carefully select the doctor to perform it. After all, this is the person into whose hands you're placing your physical appearance. First and foremost, you should make sure that the doctor is board-certified to perform cosmetic surgery, and, even better, that they have received specialized training in the particular part of the body you want to improve.

"Certification in a specific area of the body means that the doctor has even greater in-depth knowledge and experience in that area than someone in general plastic surgery," says Robert Gray, MD, FACS, a cosmetic surgeon at MD Spa in Manteca, who specializes in facial cosmetic surgery.

These days, the internet is an invaluable tool in helping you to shop around. Check out the websites of your local doctors for information about the procedures they perform, their qualifications, and to view before and after photos. Shaukat Shah, MD, of Total Body Medi-Spa in Stockton suggests one-on-one research. "Talk to other patients that have been treated by the physician to get a sense of results, and an appreciation for the post procedure care and follow-up," says Shah.

Once you've narrowed down your choices, the next step is the initial face-to-face consultation. "This is when the surgeon and the patient come together as a single team," says Hugh L. Vu, MD, MPH, of Vu Plastic and Cosmetic Surgery in Stockton, by "focusing on what best option or technique to use to achieve the goal of the patient."

During such a session, the patient's expectations, current health, medications, and age are discussed, as well as possible risks or complications. From here, a plan of attack is proposed, including options the patient might not have considered or even been aware of. After this initial session, you should have a pretty good idea of whether or not you trust this doctor with your appearance and your well-being.