

Ask the doctor:

When is plastic surgery appropriate?

Q: What is plastic surgery?

Plastic surgery is a specialty that encompasses both reconstructive and aesthetic or cosmetic surgery.


Q: What are the differences between reconstructive and cosmetic plastic surgery?

Reconstructive seeks to restore form and/or function to any part of the body affected by such things as birth defects, injury or disease. It comprises correcting defects of the skin, musculoskeletal system, craniomaxillofacial structures (mouth, jaws, face, skull), hand, extremities, breast and trunk. Aesthetic or cosmetic plastic surgery comprises surgical and nonsurgical procedures designed to improve appearance or correct imperfections of the body.

Q: How do I choose an appropriate surgeon?

This decision is part objective — what you know about the surgeon's skills, training, experience, references and areas of expertise — and part subjective — does the surgeon instill trust and confidence in you, listen and understand your concerns and specific needs?

It's important that any physician be board

A professional portrait of Cassidy Mitchell, MD, a man with short brown hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a patterned tie. He is standing with his hands in his pockets, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

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certified within his or her specialty. The American Board of Plastic Surgery (ABPS) is responsible for certifying plastic surgeons. ABPS-certified surgeons have graduated from an accredited medical school and completed at least five years of additional training as a resident surgeon — with at least two years devoted entirely to plastic surgery — in a program accredited by the Accreditation Council for Medical Education. Certification is a voluntary process a surgeon seeks after this training. To become certified, the doctor then must pass a comprehensive written and oral examination.

Professional affiliation with the American Society of Plastic Surgeons also is important. Member doctors have five years of surgical training with a minimum of two years in plastic surgery, are trained and experienced in all plastic surgery procedures, operate only in accredited medical facilities, adhere to a strict code of ethics and fulfill continuing medical education requirements.

Q: What questions should I ask my doctor?

Are you certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery, and are you a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons? How many years have you been in practice, and what is your experience in performing my procedure? Is the procedure being performed in a facility accredited by a nationally or state-recognized accrediting agency, or is it state-licensed or Medicare-certified? What are alternatives to the procedure? What are the risks and complications associated with my procedure?

Q: What types of plastic surgery are available within the BryanLGH Physician Network?

Reconstructive procedures available include breast reconstruction, breast reduction, surgery for skin cancers and other benign skin lesions, facial trauma and upper and lower extremity reconstruction.

Aesthetic surgery available includes facial rejuvenation procedures such as a face lift, brow lift or eyelid surgery; nose surgery; otoplasties for prominent ears; breast surgeries such as augmentations and breast lifts; and body contouring procedures such as tummy tucks and laser-assisted liposuction.

Nonsurgical aesthetic products and procedures available are Botox® and fillers such as Juvederm®, Radiesse®

and Sculptra®; and laser skin resurfacing, including ProFractional therapy™ and light chemical peels such as Melanage™ to address skin texture problems and areas of hyperpigmentation — darkening of the skin — on the face.

Q: Is plastic surgery safe?

Plastic surgery is generally as safe as other surgical procedures. With all procedures, there are inherent risks. You must weigh potential risks and complications against potential benefits you should reasonably expect to achieve. By discussing the procedure in depth with your surgeon — what is involved, expected post-procedural course, potential complications and alternatives — you can make an informed decision on whether or not to proceed.

Q: Will insurance cover the cost of plastic surgery?

Reconstructive surgery generally is covered by most health insurance policies, although coverage for specific procedures and levels of coverage may vary greatly. When possible, we can work to receive preauthorization from your insurance company prior to proceeding.

Cosmetic surgery usually is not covered by health insurance because it is considered “elective,” or your choice, and not a medical necessity. In assessing whether the procedure will be covered, your insurance carrier looks at the primary reason the procedure is being performed: Is it for relief of symptoms or for cosmetic improvement?

Q: Are BryanLGH and its network facilities accredited?

BryanLGH and the outpatient and same-day surgery facilities in the BryanLGH Physician Network where plastic surgeries are performed are accredited. This means they meet strict national standards for equipment, operating room safety, personnel and surgeon credentials. ■

For more information about the benefits of reconstructive and aesthetic surgery, contact the Lincoln Aesthetic Surgical Institute by calling (402) 483-8530.

BryanLGH Physician Network includes many primary care physicians and specialists who are accepting patients. To learn more, go to bryanlghphysiciannetwork.org.