

# Understanding Your Skin

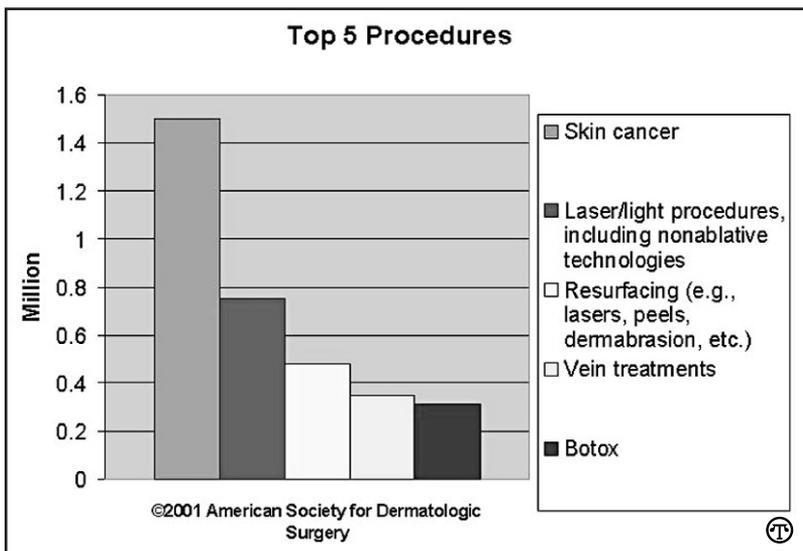
## Cosmetic Surgeries Top List Of Most Popular Skin Fixes

(NAPSA)—Cosmetic skin surgeries are more popular than ever, particularly among women, says a recent survey by the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery (ASDS). While skin cancer surgery is overwhelmingly the core procedure, aesthetic treatments hold four of the top five most common procedures performed by dermatologic surgeons.

As a group, these skin surgery experts performed an estimated 3.9 million procedures in 2001. Whether you prefer to get resurfaced by a laser, eliminate unwanted body hair, peel away fine lines or fill in wrinkles, dermatologic surgeons have the training and skills to provide safe and effective procedures to keep your skin young and healthy.

High-tech laser/light procedures, such as hair removal and non-ablative (subsurface) skin rejuvenation, accounted for the second most popular surgeries performed. Skin resurfacing comes in a close third, with chemical peels, laser resurfacing and microdermabrasion as the leading techniques. Vein treatments and botulinum toxin (Botox®) hold fourth and fifth place, respectively.

Not surprisingly, women are the primary consumers of cosmetic surgery. The ASDS study shows that women represent 62 percent of all patients being treated and comprise 90 percent of all patients seeking bovine collagen, Botox, chemical peels, microdermabrasion and sclerotherapy for leg veins. Further, cosmetic surgery is no longer just for the middle aged. While the average woman who visits her dermatologic surgeon is just 51 years old, nearly 25 percent of all female patients were under the age of 40.



ASDS President Dr. Stephen Mandy of Miami, FL, explains that “advances in technology enable less-invasive treatments with speedy recoveries that are ideal for younger patients looking for subtle, gradual improvement.” However, Dr. Mandy cautions that the popularity and “seeming” simplicity of these procedures also make them attractive targets for exploitation by unqualified, non-medical providers.

### Is there a doctor in the house?

The number of patients who have suffered complications from what should be relatively safe procedures is growing at such an alarming rate that the ASDS recently issued a consumer warning. Although spas, salons and walk-in clinics may advertise beauty fixes at low prices, experts caution that cosmetic skin treatments involving lasers and light devices, microdermabrasion techniques, injectable fillers or Botox injections are still considered surgery. Accordingly, such procedures should always be

performed by a doctor or under direct physician supervision.

When it comes to evaluating your cosmetic surgery specialist, consider the following guidelines:

**Do insist a doctor is on site.** If a physician is not performing the procedure, make sure that a supervising physician is on site and available to treat any problems that may occur.

**Do ask questions.** Ask about the qualifications of the person performing the procedure, number of treatments performed and references you can check.

**Don't** have cosmetic skin surgery at a place that allows you to choose your own treatment from a menu of services.

**Don't** be afraid to ask for a test spot to determine how your skin type will respond to treatment.

To learn more about cosmetic skin surgery and to find a dermatologic surgeon in your area, call the ASDS toll-free consumer hotline at **1-800-441-2737** or you can visit the Society's Web site at **www.aboutskinsurgery.com**.