

Health Trends

Patients Agree: More Homework Before Surgery Is Needed

(NAPSA)—If you plan on having cosmetic plastic surgery done, or know someone who is, the results of a new survey may be helpful.

Although eight out of 10 cosmetic plastic surgery patients are satisfied with their surgical experience, nearly 40 percent believe they should have been more proactive in learning what to expect, according to an American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) survey conducted by Harris Interactive.

The findings suggest that some additional knowledge about potential side effects and complications may have improved patients' surgical experience and outcome. Before surgery, 91 percent of cosmetic plastic surgery patients said they knew what to expect; however, fewer than half recalled being informed of some common side effects and complications such as bleeding (48 percent) and nausea/vomiting (42 percent) or blood clots (34 percent).

Some Don't Check Credentials

In addition, some cosmetic plastic surgery patients failed to ask questions to help them evaluate whether their doctor was qualified to perform their procedure. Nearly one-third (28 percent) of cosmetic plastic surgery patients did not check their doctors' credentials before surgery. Furthermore, 37 percent did not check if their surgeon was certified by the American

Questions To Ask Before Surgery

- What are your credentials?
- How many procedures of this type have you performed?
- Are there alternatives to surgery?
- Where and how will you perform my procedure?
- What do I need to do to prepare?
- What are the risks involved with my procedure?
- How will complications be handled?
- How long a recovery period can I expect?



Board of Plastic Surgery.

During Physician Consultation

During the physician consultation, patients should always ask about the physician's credentials and training experience. Other questions to ask include:

- How many procedures of this type have you performed?
- Are there alternatives to surgery?
- Where and how will you perform my procedure?
- What are the risks involved with my procedure?

“While it is encouraging that most patients surveyed were pleased with the outcome of their surgery, the findings stress the continued need for patients to do

their homework,” said ASPS President Roxanne Guy, M.D. “Ensuring your physician has the proper training and credentials and learning all you can about possible side effects and complications are essential when considering any medical procedure. You can afford to be nonchalant about some things, but surgery is not one of them.”

The survey was designed to assess the differences between 301 patients who had cosmetic plastic surgery (breast augmentation, tummy tuck, liposuction, etc.) and 316 patients who had medically necessary surgery (gynecologic, orthopedic, ophthalmic, etc.). However, both groups reported similar experiences, perceptions and attitudes regarding their surgical experiences.

“The study suggests patients are not as aware as they should be when it comes to understanding possible side effects and complications after surgery,” said Dr. Guy. “Patients need to take a proactive role in their surgical experience, including asking how postsurgical side effects and complications could affect them and how to manage them. Listening closely to what your physician tells you about the potential risks of your procedure is also important.”

Additional survey results are available by visiting www.plastic.surgery.org.