



## FACT SHEET

### TOOL KIT FOR TEEN CARE, SECOND EDITION

# PLASTIC SURGERY

## What are the different types of plastic surgery?

- Cosmetic surgery is done to reshape normal structures of the body and to improve how the individual feels about her appearance. Sometimes this improves self-esteem.
- Reconstructive surgery is performed on abnormal structures of the body caused by birth defects, trauma, or tumors. It generally is done to improve function but also may be performed to bring back a normal appearance.
- When reconstructive surgery is performed to correct a birth defect or improve function, it usually is covered by insurance.

## What are the most common plastic surgery procedures for teens?

- Chemical peels and dermabrasion to remove acne scars
- Breast augmentation (enlargement with implants) and breast reduction surgery (make breasts smaller)
- Rhinoplasty (nose surgery)
- Liposuction (removing fatty tissue from certain areas of the body)
- If you have questions about any of these procedures, speak to your health care provider. They may refer you to a specialist, if necessary.

## What are the risks of plastic surgery?

- If you are considering plastic surgery, you should discuss your expectations in advance with your doctor and consider the possible complications and the consequences of a less than desired outcome.
- Anytime surgery is performed, there is a risk of infection, bleeding, and injury to normal structures, such as nerves, or failure of healing.

- Many of these procedures are considered cosmetic and are not covered by insurance. This means that they must be paid for by you or your family.
- If you are considering plastic surgery, it is very important that you choose a qualified and experienced surgeon.

## When is breast surgery needed?

- Breast size varies among women and often depends on genetics and your weight.
- Some women are bothered by extremely large breasts that result in neck and back pain and prevent some women from participation in sports. For these women, having a breast reduction operation allows them to feel less self-conscious, have less pain, and be more active.
- Women with different sized breasts may feel self-conscious and decide to have breast surgery.

## What are breast implants?

- Breast implants usually are made of silicone and filled with saline, oil, or silicone.
- In 2006, the United States Food and Drug Administration determined that there were no ill effects from silicone breast implants.
- Breast implants are inserted either under breast tissue or under the chest muscle for breast augmentation (increase in size) or reconstruction.
- Some risks of breast implants are listed as follows:
  - Additional surgeries with or without removal of the implant
  - Hardening of the area around the implant
  - Breast pain
  - Changes in nipple and breast sensation
  - Rupture that causes the implant to deflate
  - Rupture that may or may not cause any symptoms
  - Migration (movement) of the implant



### What are some of the important factors you should consider when deciding whether or not to get breast implants?

- Breast implants do not last forever.
- You may need additional surgeries on your breasts over your lifetime because of complications or unsatisfactory cosmetic outcomes.
- Many of the changes to your breasts following the surgery cannot be undone. If you later choose to have your implants removed and not replaced, your breasts will not change back to the way they looked before your implant surgery.
- You may have permanent dimpling, puckering, wrinkling, or other cosmetic changes.
- When you have your implants replaced, your risk of complications increases compared to your first surgery.
- Routine mammograms to screen for breast cancer will be more difficult with breast implants.
- Breast implants may affect your ability to breast-feed, either by reducing or stopping milk production.

### What is body dysmorphic disorder?

- Body dysmorphic disorder is a mental disorder that involves distorted body image. A person imagines a physical defect or exaggerates concern about a minor defect.
- People with this disorder think about the defect for at least an hour per day, and it can affect their daily activities and functioning
- Body dysmorphic disorder often begins in adolescence, a time when people generally are most sensitive about their appearance. It may become constant and lead to a great deal of emotional distress.
- The person may go to many dermatologists or plastic surgeons and go through painful or risky procedures to try to change the imagined defect.
- The medical procedures rarely produce relief, and may lead to a worsening of the symptoms. If you suspect you have body dysmorphic disorder, see your doctor or a mental health professional.

### What about labial surgery?

- A recent trend among some women is to remove their pubic hair by shaving, or waxing.
- The focus on the appearance of the labia (the folds of skin on the external genitalia) has led some gynecologists and plastic surgeons to notice an increase in requests for labial surgery.
- The size of the labia varies among women.
- Labial asymmetry (or unevenness) also is common among women. In this condition, the right and left labia appear slightly different in size.
- Some women are uncomfortable with uneven or enlarged labia minora (lips), which can lead to self-consciousness and discomfort with wearing clothing, exercising, or having sex.
- The enlarged labia may protrude and appear abnormal, which can be bothersome and distressful.
- If you experience any discomfort or have concerns, it is important to discuss it with your health care provider.

### For More Information

We have provided information on the following organizations and web sites because they have information that may be of interest to our readers. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) does not necessarily endorse the views expressed or the facts presented by these organizations or on these web sites. Further, ACOG does not endorse any commercial products that may be advertised or available from these organizations or on these web sites.

#### American Association of Plastic Surgeons

Telephone: (978) 927-8330  
Web: [www.aaps1921.org/](http://www.aaps1921.org/)

#### American Society of Plastic Surgeons

Telephone: (847) 228-9900  
Web: [www.plasticsurgery.org](http://www.plasticsurgery.org)

#### The Foundation for Reconstructive Plastic Surgery

Telephone: (212) 794-1234  
Web: [www.frps.org](http://www.frps.org)

#### International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery

Telephone: (603) 643-2325  
Web: [www.isaps.org](http://www.isaps.org)

#### U.S. Food and Drug Administration: Breast Implant Questions and Answers

Center for Devices and Radiological Health  
Food and Drug Administration  
Telephone: (888) INFO-FDA (463-6332)  
Web: [www.fda.gov/cdrh/breastimplants/qa2006.html](http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/breastimplants/qa2006.html)