

Suburban Life

Lorraine McClash editor/477-5450



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Men enter quest to recover youthfulness

By Sue Mason
staff writer

It was a tillating cocktail conversation last year, when Cher made front page headlines about the money she reportedly spent reshaping her body.

The famous faces of Jason Roberts, Mark Hamill and Van Johnson have been touched up after automobile accidents, and then there's the two faces of Montgomery Clift in "Rain Tree County" — the one before and the one after plastic surgery to mask a severe cut from his nose through his upper lip.

More and more people are going under the scalpel to alter their looks, be it reshaping the nose, removing bags from under the eyes, shedding a pot belly, enlarging the breasts or tightening up facial skin. What was once considered vanity surgery for the privileged class is becoming an acceptable procedure among middle-class America.

"It's not just for the Park Avenue people, it's for everybody in the mainstream," said Dr. Fanny dela Cruz of the West Bloomfield Plastic Surgery Center. "Everyone I have worked with wants to enhance their appearance and improve their self-worth. And you see that after the surgery."

Cosmetic or aesthetic surgery has been popular with women, but in the past five to eight years, surgical enhancement has become popular with men. As for Hoset Shoumi, 24, it's a way of correcting what they see as flaws in their appearance.

A HAIR stylist at Mariomax in Farmington Hills, Hoset had plastic surgery a year ago to remove a hump in his nose and correct a bone deformity that was affecting his breathing.

"It changes your life," he said. "You appreciate things a lot more. I've gained a lot of confidence in myself. I've gotten into my work more and into fashion."

"I never liked my looks, but I never know how much it bothered me until I had the surgery."

For many men, it's a way to regain a youthful appearance to "keep their jobs." Society has put a premium on youthfulness and cosmetic surgery is a way to regain it.

"Men are very conscious of things like droopy necks, big turkey gobblers," said Dr. G. Jan Beekhuis of Birmingham who has been performing facial cosmetic surgery for 15 years. "And when a man gets into his 50s and has eye bags and a gobbler, people look at him like he's over the hill."

"People are living longer and in their older years they're more active. They want to look good and feel good about themselves. They don't like hearing their grandchildren say 'oh, you have so many wrinkles.'"

Men aren't as open as women about having cosmetic surgery. They are coy because of the social stigma of investing money in a surgery that isn't for a life-threatening situation.

"I think men are a little more apt to do it for a competitive reason and for business," said Dr. Michael Milan, a Birmingham plastic surgeon. "And in that situation, they'd prefer not to broadcast it, but rather get the comments about working out."

HOSSET doesn't tell people he's had a "nose job." He's not ashamed of having the surgery and, if asked why he looks different, he explains. He just doesn't volunteer the information.

One of his criteria for the surgery was to have a "normal nose." He didn't want a perfect nose or one that turned up on the end, just a normal one.

"I have a lot of clients who have had plastic surgery, and I can spot a nose job," he said. "They're too perfect, mine looks normal."

Dela Cruz, Beekhuis and Milan, who perform some of their cosmetic procedures at the Horizon Surgical Center in Livonia, have noticed an increase in the number of men opting for cosmetic surgery.

Beekhuis, who specializes in facial cosmetic surgery, estimates that one quarter to a third of his patients are men. Many are interested in improving the looks of their nose, chins and cheeks.

"Many want a more square, strong chin or jaw line, so they come in for chin augmentation," he said. "Those that want a youthful look (a facelift) are not as common, but that's increasing."

Dela Cruz has found that abdominal liposuction, the removal of excess fatty tissue by suctioning, is popular among her male clients. They don't like "pot bellies," not to mention bags under the eyes and "turkey gobblers."

Dela Cruz maintains that a good plastic surgeon "has to be attuned to the sensitive side of the humanities."

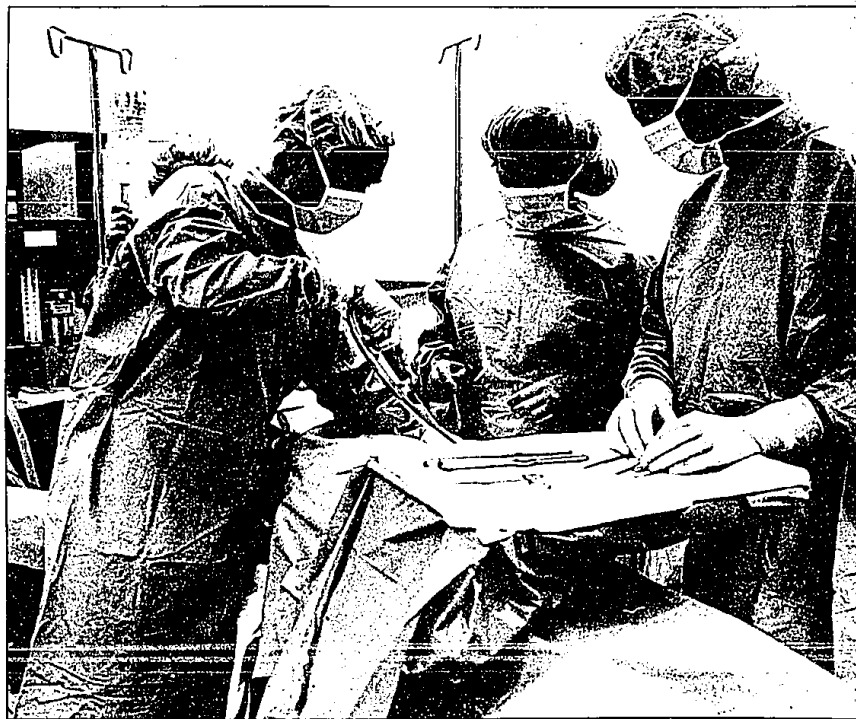
"WE'RE NOT obligated to just whack out the excess tissue, we're obligated to mold it into place," she said. "There's a lot of surgical skill involved. A plastic surgeon has to have the eye of an eagle, the heart of a lion and the hands of an artist."

Milan specializes in body contouring — breast augmentations or reductions, liposuction, tummy tucks and the like. Among his male patients, the interest is in removal of "love handles," fatty pads around the waist.

He has found the rewarding side of plastic surgery is the changes in the patient after the procedure. Many start exercise programs and make changes in their appearance — new hair styles, clothing and makeup.

"It improves how they feel about themselves and if they like themselves, they do better in everything," he said.

Dela Cruz agreed. "If you don't have a great feeling about yourself inside, it's almost as painful as hav-



Plastic surgeon Dr. Michael Milan demonstrates how liposuction is used for body contouring to Dr. G. Jan Beekhuis, a facial cosmetic surgeon, at the Horizon Surgery Center in Livonia.

ART EMANUELE/staff photographer

ing a diseased appendix. Plastic surgery can let a person stand tall, be better in their relationships with others and achieve their goals in life."

Beekhuis believes the increased interest in cosmetic surgery is because of the degree of safety, the quick recovery time and the ease with which it can be done, not to mention the cost.

Insurance companies usually don't cover the cost of the surgery unless it's to correct a medical problem. A facelift today can cost from \$5,000 to \$8,000 compared to around \$4,500 10 years ago, Beekhuis said. And a chin augmentation can run about \$1,000.

"IT'S AN investment in yourself and one can't expect someone else to

make the investment for you," Milan added. "If they did, we'd all be rich."

The one thing the doctors stress is that patients have to be realistic about plastic surgery. Patients should look at it as a way of enhancing the quality of life not to come out looking like Michael Jackson, they said.

Milan, who has had patients bring in pictures from magazines, like Playboy and Penthouse to show what they want, said a surgeon has to be "frank, but gentle" in dealing with unrealistic expectations.

"There are some patients you just can't help," he said. "There's no way you can make a 200-pound woman look like Cheryl Tiegs. If her expectations can't be refocused, she's not a good candidate for plastic surgery."

"It (plastic surgery) has its place,

'There's a lot of surgical skill involved. A plastic surgeon has to have the eye of an eagle, the heart of a lion and the hands of an artist.'

—Dr. Fanny dela Cruz

but it's best for people who have realistic expectations," dela Cruz added. "You have to look at what the patient wants, what's best for the pa-



tient and what the surgeon can do. "It's a tremendous investment and it's the psychological part of it that you see."

Set realistic goals for plastic surgery's results

By Sue Mason
staff writer

Bennett Cerf once observed that "middle age is when your old classmates are so gray and wrinkled and bald that they don't recognize you."

Women, and a growing number of men, are using cosmetic surgery to reverse the aging process. They want a youthful look; they want to project an image of vigor, fitness and youth. Plastic surgery can accomplish that by shaving five to 10 years off their appearances.

In short, you'll look better right away, but the final result may take awhile.

The next step is finding a qualified surgeon to revitalize your appearance.

DON'T BE shy about checking on their specialties. A plastic surgeon who's well regarded for his work on reconstructive hand surgery may lack the expertise to perform corrective nose surgery. Likewise, a cosmetic surgeon who is well known for facelifts may have little experience in body contouring.

There are several ways of finding doctors beyond the Yellow Pages and word of mouth.

The American Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Inc. has a plastic surgeon referral service (1-800-635-0635) that, within a week, will provide the names of 10 doctors who are certified by the American Board of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery and practice in the caller's geographic area. It also can verify if a physician is board-certified.

THE SOCIETY is conducting a nationwide campaign to educate consumers on what to look for in doctors' credentials. Any physician is allowed to perform surgical procedures in a state in which he or

she is licensed.

However, of the more than 40,000 plastic surgeons throughout the United States, only approximately 2,800 are certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery.

The certification hinges on completion of four years of medical school, four or five years of general surgical training and at least two years of training in an approved

plastic surgery residency program, not to mention oral and written examinations. A similar toll-free service, the Facial Plastic Surgery Information Service (1-800-332-FACE), can provide a list of board-certified facial plastic surgeons in the caller's state. Information also is as close as the public library. The American Board of Medical Specialties, the policing

agency of the American Medical Association, provides libraries with a seven-volume directory of doctors who are certified in their specialties.

AND DON'T discount recommendations from people who have had plastic surgery. They better than anyone else can tell you if a doctor has what it takes to give your looks a boost. Good results speak loudly and

no surgeon can keep the doors open on an elective surgery practice without a good word-of-mouth referral system.

Also, don't be shy about asking questions. Cosmetic surgery is surgery and it does have its risks: bleeding, infection, reaction to anesthesia. Likewise, don't withhold any pertinent medical information from your doctor.

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THE FIRST step probably is to decide what it is you want done and make sure that decision is realistic. You may wish you looked like Cheryl Tiegs, but liposuction isn't a substitute for a good diet when you are 50 pounds overweight.

Unlike an Elizabeth Arden makeover, the results of plastic surgery can't be erased with cold cream and a tissue. Plastic surgery is a permanent solution.

Patients need to realize that the changes won't happen overnight. In the case of body contouring, the surgery is 80 percent of what the patient will look like six months later and after two to six weeks of wearing a compression girdle.

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