

ASK DR. KATZEN



OH Magazine is pleased to present a series of articles featuring reader questions answered by expert plastic surgeon J. Timothy Katzen, MD, FACS. Send questions to AskDrKatzen@ObesityHelp.com and your question may be answered in a future issue.

What are the most important questions you should ask a plastic surgeon when considering them to do work on you?

-Christina S.

There are five essential questions to ask your plastic surgeon, listed here in order of importance:

1. How many of these surgeries have you performed in weight loss patients?

The answer should be at least 50 cases of the exact procedure you are seeking in weight loss patients. Your plastic surgeon should be able to readily supply a list of names and telephone numbers of patients who have had this procedure. Talk to these patients and ask them frank questions. If your potential plastic surgeon has not performed over 50 of the procedure you are seeking, do not become a guinea pig, no matter what they quote for the procedure. If your potential plastic surgeon says surgery for weight loss patients is the same as for the general patient population, please go elsewhere. Without proper experience, plastic surgery in weight loss patients can be catastrophic.

2. Are you board certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery?

Your surgeon should be a board certified plastic surgeon. The American Board of Plastic Surgery is the only true plastic surgery board. It requires a minimum of six years of plastic surgery training. On average, though, most plastic surgeons complete five years of general surgery, then two to three years of subspecialty in plastic surgery. This board requires passing scores on very stringent written and oral examinations. In addition, the American Board of Plastic Surgery is the only board sanctioned and recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties, which is a branch of the American Medical Association. To determine who is certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery, please visit www.PlasticSurgery.org.

In addition, unfortunately, many physicians without plastic surgery certification are calling themselves “plastic surgeons”. There are many boards whose name sounds very similar to the American Board of Plastic Surgery, issuing “certification”. One can even purchase plastic surgery diplomas during a weekend course in liposuction or face-lifting. To make matters worse, it is legal for **any** medical doctor in **any** specialty to advertise as a “Cosmetic Surgeon”. This means physicians without proper training are legally practicing plastic surgery in cities all over America. While this may not be fair to the public, the legality was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court. Be safe. Choose a plastic surgeon certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery.

3. Which hospitals give you admitting privileges?

Your neighborhood hospitals spend a significant amount of time verifying their medical staff’s credentials. They research your physician’s records during university, medical school, residency, fellowship training and clinical practice. Hospitals investigate any criminal activities and look into all malpractice cases. Hospitals perform a thorough background check before any medical staff is allowed to practice medicine in their hospital.

In addition, hospitals realize the difference between cardiologists, general surgeons, and plastic surgeons and restrict their physicians to the medical practice appropriate to their training. Therefore, only a plastic surgeon can perform plastic surgery in a hospital. In the unfortunate event that you have a complication and need to go to the hospital, you want to be sure that your plastic surgeon can treat you at that hospital as a plastic surgeon. If your plastic surgery is performed by a general surgeon, your surgeon can only admit you to the hospital for complications, but may have to find a plastic surgeon you have never met to treat your complications. Thus, choose a plastic surgeon with admitting privileges in plastic surgery at a reputable hospital.

4. May I see some before and after pictures?

Demand to see pictures. Compare yourself to the before and after pictures of other patients. Make sure the pictures are of weight loss patients and are pictures of the exact procedure you seek. Plastic surgery procedures in weight loss patients are very different from the same procedure in non-weight loss patients. Also, bluntly ask your plastic surgeon if they are his patients and if he performed the entire surgery. Try to find several patients that are similar to your body type in the plastic surgeon’s portfolio. If your plastic surgeon cannot produce pictures, please go elsewhere.

5. What is your policy on revisions?

Some plastic surgeons do not charge for revisions at all, some charge for all aspects, and others will only charge for additional anesthesia and time in the operating room. This question is best answered before surgery. Then, if complications arise requiring revision, you know your surgeon’s policy.

These five questions are a good place to start. In the next issue I will provide a list of the five most important things for you to notice during your consultation. Ultimately the responsibility is yours. Do your homework. Examine your potential plastic surgeon’s Website closely. Read the OH reviews of plastic surgeons. Log onto the OH chat rooms and message boards. Call prior patients. Visit with several plastic surgeons and compare their results. Be safe, and don’t settle for less than the best.



Congratulations, you got rid of the fat! Now, get rid of the extra skin by letting Dr. Katzen help you to complete your weight loss journey. 100 percent of Dr. Katzen’s practice is devoted to reconstructive plastic surgery after weight loss. Dr Katzen has a multi-disciplinary team to address the many issues concerning weight loss. Dr. Katzen has an 80 percent rate of insurance approval. Please visit www.BodyByKatzen.com and call 1-888-KATZEN-0 for a consultation.

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