



A patient can consider various possibilities for facial cosmetic surgery through computer imaging, here with the help of a physician's assistant, at a plastic surgeon's office.

A quick look at **Botox** and beyond some popular, less invasive cosmetic procedures

Numerous non-surgical procedures performed in a routine office visit can make your skin more radiant, your lips more kissable, and lift your self-confidence along with your brow line. The most popular request is a Botox injection, the so-called "lunchtime lift." While you may not need to go to a hospital for these procedures, they still require you to do your homework.

Birthmark removal: Laser treatments can get rid of an unwanted birthmark, whether it's the color of coffee or red wine. Treatment times vary, depending on the size of the area. Recovery time is quick, although bruising may persist for a few days.

Botox (Botulinum toxin): Botox injections temporarily erase wrinkles by relaxing or paralyzing muscles that contract during facial expressions, usually around the forehead, eyes and lower face. Treatment has little or no down time. The results can last up to four months. It may take a few days to see the effects.

Chemical peels (superficial peels): Chemical solutions remove outer layers of damaged, finely wrinkled or unevenly pigmented facial skin, leaving it smooth and toned. Chemical peels vary according to specific ingredients and strength. Mild peels use alpha hydroxy acids, such as glycolic or fruit acids. Medium peels use TCA (trichloroacetic acid). Deep peels use phenol, a strong chemical solution. Check with your plastic surgeon about benefits, risks and recovery

time for each procedure. Most can be performed in an office-based surgical facility. (Micropeels use a milder glycolic acid solution, can be performed by a nurse or aesthetician, and have relatively no down time.)

Collagen and fat injections: Also known as injectable fillers, these are used to fill in wrinkles (smile lines, frown lines, crows feet) from underneath the skin surface, and also used to plump up the lips. The results are temporary and vary in duration. These procedures can take less than an hour, and have very little down time. Various products are available, including some not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Dermabrasion: This invasive resurfacing technique is often used to treat acne scars and wrinkles around the mouth. The top layer of skin is, in effect, sanded away with a speed rotary wheel. It takes seven to 14 days to heal. After that, swelling and redness may take from one to six months to go away.

Endermologie: This procedure reportedly breaks down fat and cellulite, increases circulation and improves skin tone. A specialized technician uses a machine that applies rolling pressure and suction to the skin. It takes about 40 minutes and usually requires one or two weekly sessions over a couple months. Endermologie is helpful in reducing swelling after liposuction. *(Continued on Page 172)*

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Laser hair removal: This non-invasive process uses a low-energy laser to permanently reduce unwanted facial or body hair by disabling hair follicles. It can take several minutes to several hours, and several sessions.

Microdermabrasion: This non-invasive procedure employs a little machine to exfoliate the skin, leaving a smooth, soft surface. It can be done by an aesthetician three or four days before the wedding. Lots of Hollywood stars do this before big awards ceremonies.

Mole removal: There are two ways to get rid of an unsightly mole – shaving and excision. Both methods can be done in a doctor's office with local anesthesia, and both leave some scarring. Healing time is minimal.

Sclerotherapy: This procedure removes spider veins, those small purple and red veins frequently found on thighs or the lower legs. A liquid chemical is injected directly into the offending veins, causing them to contract and collapse. It make take a few sessions. It is relatively painless, and it may be necessary to wear an Ace bandage for a few days.

Tattoo removal: If you need to get rid of "Johnny" before you marry "James," plan ahead. Tattoo removal is done with lasers and requires at least five or six treatments about two months apart.

-Susan Mittleman

For further information, contact the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery. Books on the subject include *The Smart Woman's Guide to Plastic Surgery*, written by Jean M. Loftus, M.D., and published by Contemporary Books.

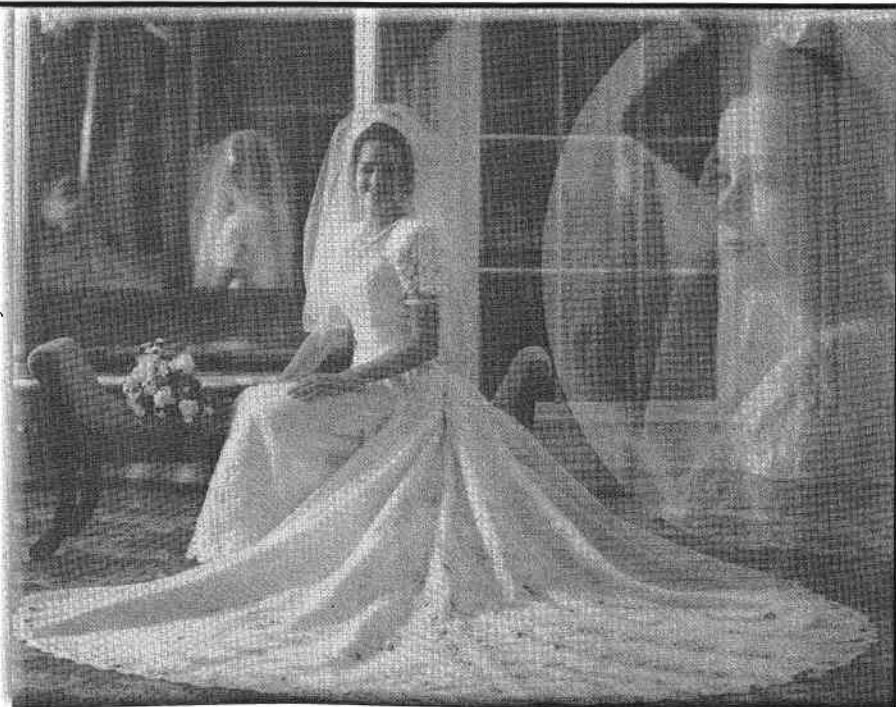
DECIDING IF COSMETIC SURGERY IS RIGHT FOR YOU

- FIND A QUALIFIED PLASTIC SURGEON WITH SUFFICIENT EXPERTISE IN THE PROCEDURE THAT YOU WISH TO HAVE DONE.
- GET RECOMMENDATIONS AND PATIENT REFERENCES.
- INTERVIEW A FEW DOCTORS UNTIL YOU FIND ONE WITH WHOM YOU ARE COMFORTABLE.
- LOOK AT "BEFORE" AND "AFTER" PHOTOS.
- DISCUSS RISKS AND RECOVERY TIME WITH YOUR DOCTOR. MANY DOCTORS RECOMMEND THAT MORE INVASIVE PROCEDURES BE DONE AT LEAST THREE MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING.
- MAKE SURE THAT YOU AND YOUR DOCTOR AGREE IN ADVANCE ON THE INTENDED RESULTS.

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