

## 10 Plastic Surgery Mistakes No One Talks About

8.9.11

We all know about the plastic surgery horror stories of fatal blood clots or heart attacks, and have gasped at the pictures of notoriously butchered celebs like Michael Jackson and Courtney Love. But more often than not, we never find out about the other ways plastic surgery can go wrong -- ways that in some cases, aren't the doctor's fault.

"Plastic surgery is major surgery," says **Semira Bayati, a board certified plastic surgeon in Newport Beach, Calif.** -- and a lot of times, no matter how skilled the doctor, crazy side effects can happen.

Knowing about these less-talked about ways that plastic surgery can go wrong is more important than ever, considering the growing number of people in the U.S. who are opting for cosmetic procedures. According to a recent survey, 51 percent of the population approves of cosmetic and plastic surgery. "As the numbers suggest, people in every income bracket, single or married, male or female, view plastic surgery as a reasonable option today," says Felmont F. Eaves III, MD, President of The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery.

So, before you sign up for a Botox session at your next dentist appointment or lust after a nose job when "Us Weekly" runs enviable before and after shots of Ashlee Simpson, read on. You'll want to know about these shocking ways that plastic surgery can leave you with less than stellar results. They happen more frequently than you might expect.

### **Mistake No. 1: Bad scarring**

When it comes to scars from big procedures like tummy tucks and breast lifts, many believe it's a surgeon's skill that determines how badly you'll scar post surgery. However, **Bayati** says it really comes down to a patient's genetic factors. A skilled plastic surgeon "can do the same exact closure on two different people, and one heals with imperceptible scars and one doesn't," she says. Something important to keep in mind before going under the knife -- especially if you've got a darker complexion and high skin pigmentation, which **Bayati** says put you in the high risk category for scarring.



### **Mistake No. 2: You don't check the doc's creds closely enough**

So, you're at your annual pap smear and one idle glance at the wall between your legs reveals your gynecologist now offers Botox injections. Or you're getting your teeth cleaned and there is a Juvederm poster above the sink advising you to "Kiss those laugh lines goodbye." Since when do your gynecologist and dentist care about your wrinkles? What the heck is going on?

Here's a newsflash: Regular docs can perform the same plastic surgeries as certified plastic surgeons. Dr. Leonard Tachmes says that any MD can claim to be a surgeon (and they are in growing numbers due to monetary incentives), but only a surgeon who is board certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery -- the only plastic surgery board recognized by the American Medical Association -- should be performing these aesthetic procedures.

### **Mistake No. 3: New fat appears in new (and unwanted) places after liposuction**

There is a common misunderstanding that if a patient gets liposuction in one area of the body, the fat will "move" to another area of the body. This is false, says Dr. Fardad Forouzanpour, a cosmetic surgeon in Beverly Hills, Calif. "Fat doesn't move -- fat cells in your stomach will always be in your stomach and fat cells in your thighs will always be in your thighs." He says that when surgeons perform liposuction in one area (say, the belly), they remove a certain amount of fat cells in that area. But that means if the patient then gains 15 pounds post lipo, the fat will be gained in areas that haven't been lipo'd (say, the arms or thighs) as those areas still have 100 percent of their fat cells. Bottom line: If a woman gains weight after lipo, she will likely gain fat in a place she didn't have it before. Somehow trading an instantly flat tummy for extra plump arms doesn't seem so appealing, huh?



### **Mistake No. 4: The dreaded Tori Spelling breast gap**

Tori Spelling constantly tops the "worst plastic surgery" lists floating around the Internet for her gapped and drooping breast implants, and the common reactions have been to blame her doctor. However, **Bayati** says that the large gap between her breasts isn't due to the procedure; more surprisingly, it's due to the fact that she just happens to have a very wide and depressed sternum, or breastbone. And while that wasn't apparent when Spelling had small boobs, it is exaggerated with the addition of large implants over her chest muscles.

It's actually quite common for women to have irregular breastbones and rib cages, which is why four out of every 10 women with breast implants go back to the doc post surgery to have them changed.

### **Mistake No. 5: You trust a shady medical spa**

In a 2008 survey by the American Academy of Facial and Plastic Reconstructive Surgery, more than 75 percent of doctors said that they knew of a medical spa with a medical director who was nowhere to be seen -- not on-site performing, or even overseeing, medical procedures. That's a lot of risky procedures being performed by poorly trained employees in unregulated offices.



"Non-plastic surgeons are performing liposuction on patients in these medical spas and clinics and killing them," says Tachmes. Doctors at these spas give patients local anesthesia rather than general anesthesia (in most states, anesthesia cannot be administered in an office without hospital affiliation) and end up overdosing the patients because the pain gets too intense. The patients then die right there on the table from respiratory depression, says Tachmes.



#### **Mistake No. 6: You lie about your cigarette habit**

If you are a smoker, most plastic surgeons won't operate on you. "Heavy smokers have low oxygen content in the blood," says Tachmes. "So when they have any type of cosmetic surgery that requires a pull or lift, like a breast or face lift, they suffer from poor wound healing, wound separation, or the skin can become necrotic, turning black and dying."

#### **Mistake No. 7: You don't tell your doc about the supplements you're taking**

Many women don't realize dietary supplements can affect the way their body reacts to anesthesia, and that a bad drug/supplement interaction can kill them. Diet pills and over-the-counter stimulants like metabolic enhancers and fat burners make the heart muscle irritable and can cause cardiac arrest, says **Bayati**. She says women often don't report taking them before an operation because they don't consider them medication, as most are non-prescription. This can be a fatal mistake.



#### **Mistake No. 8: Skimping on the price tag**

According to Miami board certified plastic surgeon Dr. Michael Salzhauer, it's a case of "buyer beware" when a potential patient sees plastic surgery procedures in monetary terms. "There is a reason plastic surgery usually has high costs associated with it," says Salzhauer. "Sometimes when economic times are bad, surgeons will cut their fees for the sake of acquiring new patients. However, if you hear a dramatically reduced price from a surgeon, you should ask yourself 'what corners are they cutting to offer surgery at such a low price?'"

Tachmes agrees. With the economy the way it is, people "shop their bodies around" the way they would parts for a car. And there are plenty of non-plastic surgeons ready to take advantage of that fact. "There are doctors out there that go get a one day training or attend a three day seminar in Vegas on how to do liposuction, get a little diploma, frame it their wall, and just like that -- they are off and running," says Tachmes. "They are out there like cowboys doing whatever they want," she says, and reaping the monetary rewards at the patient's expense.

#### **Mistake No. 9: Not realizing the risks of "fixing" a bad plastic surgery job**

So, say you do get a botched nose job, a facelift too tight, or lumpy lipo from a doctor who was offering a great deal. The cost of fixing that bad procedure (which insurance will not cover) far exceeds paying a legitimate doctor's fee the first time around. And, that second surgery will likely be much more painful. "The plastic surgeon fixing the botched procedure is assuming a new level of risk when taking on this patient," says Tachmes. "They are re-operating on scarred tissue with poor blood supply -- it basically becomes advanced reconstructive surgery," which explains the price jump.



#### **Mistake No. 10: Letting your dentist (or gyno) give you Botox**

Women treat Botox and other injectables fairly flippantly, but plastic surgeons agree that it takes a highly trained and skilled hand to inject the face properly. Read: Botox from your gyno is not the best idea. "A lot of these doctors are not familiar with the anatomy of the face, and the muscles of facial expression -- they are just out to make cash," says Tachmes. "They do a course for a few days and off they go injecting patients, but it takes more than just learning how to inject," he says.

Still not convinced? Tachmes says some women suffer blindness for up to four months due to faulty injections near the crows feet of their eyes. "If the product gets injected too close to the eyeball and the product migrates, it can effect the little muscles that control the focusing of the eyeball inside its bony orbit," says Tachmes, and this can cause temporary blindness.