

## Cosmetic Procedures: Questions and Answers

### 1. What are cosmetic procedures?

Cosmetic procedures range from relatively simple treatments, such as wrinkle-reducing Botox® injections to major cosmetic surgery that involves parts of the body such as the face, ears, limbs and breasts.

### 2. What are the risks associated with cosmetic procedures?

Cosmetic procedures always come with some degree of risk. In the case of cosmetic surgery, complications can arise from factors such as infection, reactions to anaesthesia or medications, aggravation of pre-existing conditions and human error.

Complications from cosmetic procedures can be minor or major and, in rare circumstances, even fatal. The decision to proceed with any cosmetic procedure should be taken carefully.

Patients are encouraged to review the attached checklist when meeting with any physician or non-physician who provides cosmetic procedures.

### 2. What kind of physician is qualified to perform cosmetic procedures?

Only physicians who are licensed as specialists in Nova Scotia are permitted to perform the following medical procedures in this province:

1. Abdominoplasty (tummy tuck)
2. Blepharoplasty (eyelid surgery)
3. Deep chemical peel
4. Implantation or removal of aesthetic prostheses, such as those of the breast, buttock, calf, cheek, chin, or nose.
5. Lipoplasty, liposuction, lipolysis, or lipectomy (surgical fat removal and/or sculpturing)
6. Breast enlargement, lift, or reduction (male or female)
7. Otoplasty (ear surgery)
8. Rhinoplasty (nose surgery)
9. Rhytidectomy (Facelift, mid-face lift)
10. Surgical lift of arm, breast, brow, buttock, thigh or total body; including body contouring

Patients are urged to contact the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia if they are aware of any general practitioner (also known as a family physician or family practitioner) who performs or offers to perform any of the procedures in this list.

### **3. How can I find out if a physician is a specialist?**

The online physician listing of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia indicates whether or not a physician is a specialist. Physicians who do not have a specialty indicated in their profile are general practitioners.

The online listing is available at: [www.cpsns.ns.ca](http://www.cpsns.ns.ca)

The specialists who most often perform cosmetic procedures are called plastic surgeons. Some of the procedures listed above may also be performed by ear, nose and throat (ENT) surgeons, general surgeons, ophthalmologists and dermatologists.

### **4. Who can perform cosmetic procedures that are not on this list?**

General practitioners in Nova Scotia are permitted to perform cosmetic procedures not included in the list above. These procedures include Botox® injections, collagen injections, dermabrasion, dermal filling, sclerotherapy, and laser hair and tattoo removal. General practitioners must nevertheless possess training in these procedures, have the proper equipment, and work within appropriate facilities. Note that many simple cosmetic procedures are also legitimately performed by non-physicians.

Patients should always ask about training, experience, qualifications and side-effects before having any cosmetic procedure; even procedures that are not performed by physicians. See the attached checklist for more information.

### **5. Are physicians permitted to advertise their services?**

Physicians in Nova Scotia are permitted to advertise their services, but certain limitations apply. For example, their advertising may not:

- be false or inaccurate
- be misleading or deceptive
- claim or imply any superiority of a particular physician over any other physician
- contain any endorsements or testimonials concerning a physician, his or her ability or services
- create unrealistic or unjustified expectations of a physician's treatment.

## Cosmetic Procedures Checklist

Cosmetic procedures can range from relatively simple wrinkle-reducing injections to complex surgery on various parts of the body. It is always a good idea to get clear answers about qualifications, experience, safety and side effects before having a cosmetic procedure. You may find it helpful to go through the following questions with your practitioner before you decide.

Most of these questions apply to procedures that may be performed only by doctors (such as cosmetic surgery) *and* to procedures that may be performed by practitioners who are not necessarily doctors (these procedures include cosmetic tattooing and cosmetic laser treatments).

1. How is the procedure performed?
2. What results can be expected from the procedure?
3. How long does the procedure take?
4. Will sedation or anaesthesia be used during the procedure? If so, who will administer it?
5. How is the facility prepared to deal with an emergency?
6. If the procedure is being performed by a physician, is he or she familiar with the policy of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia called *Qualifications Required to Perform Certain Cosmetic Procedures in Nova Scotia*? This policy lists ten cosmetic procedures that may only be performed by qualified medical specialists. It is available at:  
<http://cpsns.ns.ca.dnnmax.com/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=fF0z08uveGc%3d&tabid=92&mid=626>  
or by contacting the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia.
7. What qualifications, training and experience do the practitioner and facility staff possess?
8. How much experience does the practitioner have in performing the procedure?

9. What will the recovery period feel like, and how long will it take?
10. What kind of follow-up care, pain relief, and monitoring is required after the procedure?
11. What side-effects might occur during or after the procedure?
12. What symptoms or side-effects might require emergency care — either during or after the procedure?
13. Who should be contacted if problems arise after the procedure?
14. How does the facility deal with after-hour requests or emergencies?
15. How long after the procedure can regular activities resume?
16. Is the equipment used in the procedure sterile? How is it sterilized?
17. Are there medical conditions (such as diabetes, blood-clotting problems, or depression) that could affect the outcome of the procedure, or mean that you should not have the procedure?
18. Will any medication you take affect the procedure?
19. Has the practitioner discussed your concerns and expectations?
20. Has the practitioner asked why you are considering this procedure?
21. Are there other procedures that might work just as well or better?
22. What makes someone a good or bad candidate for this procedure?
23. How long will the results last?
24. Can the desired effect be accomplished in one procedure, or are multiple procedures necessary?
25. How does the facility or practitioner deal with patients or clients who are not pleased with the results of their procedure?