

THE BIGGEST MISTAKES
PATIENTS MAKE WITH
PLASTIC SURGERY
AND
HOW TO AVOID THEM

By
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If you've been considering plastic surgery, the surgeon you select may be one of the most important decisions you'll ever make. Making the right choice requires a certain amount of knowledge about the procedures as well as knowing what questions to ask your plastic surgeon to see if he or she is properly qualified to sculpt your face or body. In addition, you must find your own personal level of comfort and trust with the doctor you select. This report will help you in that process and assist you in making the right choice so that you will have the best chance of getting the result you want.

MISTAKE: NOT KNOWING WHERE TO START LOOKING.

Once you have decided on a course of treatment, you will want to start compiling a list of doctors to see. **Friends, family, nurses, or other physicians** are all good referral sources. Then, you can start narrowing your list by researching each provider by evaluating their training, experience, and credentials. Speaking to an actual patient is also very helpful. At Premier Plastic Surgery Center, Dr. Victor Ferrari is very proud of the fact that most of his patients come to him by **word of mouth**. Since his patients are referring their family and friends, that should tell you a lot about the consistent quality of care he offers.

MISTAKE: CHOOSING YOUR SURGEON WITHOUT EVALUATING TRAINING AND CREDENTIALS.

In order for someone to be a “true” plastic surgeon in the United States, they would have to complete four years of an accredited medical school followed by at least three years of general surgery (or some other surgical training) and at least two more years of plastic surgery residency training. However, with diminishing insurance reimbursement, many physicians trained in other fields have taken “short cuts” in their training and *called* themselves cosmetic or plastic surgeons. Legally, *any* doctor can market cosmetic services regardless of their training or competence. They also make the claim to be “board certified”, but it depends on which “board” they are referring to as to whether or not that is of value to you. Some have even gone to a weekend course and gotten some sort of “board certification”. Therefore, for the average consumer, deciphering credentials can be confusing and frustrating.

To find out if a physician's board certification is a valid one, you can log on to the **American Board of Medical Specialties** website (www.ABMS.org) and view the medical specialty of interest. For example, for plastic surgery, it is *critical* that your surgeon have board certification by the **American Board of Plastic Surgery**. Without proper board certification, you have very little assurance that your doctor has completed the rigorous training needed to safely perform your surgery.

In addition, you may want to ask about memberships in medical societies and if the physician has privileges to perform surgery at any accredited facilities in the county.

After completing four years of medical school at the University of North Carolina, Dr. Ferrari completed a full five year **general surgery residency** at the University of Kansas and then three years of **plastic surgery residency** at one of the top programs in the country, the University of Miami. He then went on to a six month **craniofacial training** program at Miami Children's Hospital. He not only served in the coveted position of **Chief Resident** in both specialties, but also obtained **board certification in both specialties**. In addition, he was also elected to the **American College of Surgeons** which bestows the **highest honors** on those who are seen to be outstanding in their field. He has also thrice been awarded the prestigious **Physicians Recognition Award** by The American Medical Association. He has also been featured in two publications from the Consumers' Research Council called "**Guide to America's Top Physicians**" and "**Guide to America's Top Surgeons.**" He has been on **numerous television and news shows** including being the first plastic surgeon in Charlotte to be involved in a televised "**Complete Makeover**". He performs most of his procedures at the fully accredited Presbyterian Hospital in Matthews. Only about 5% of plastic surgeons can match his credentials and even fewer can match his results.

MISTAKE: CHOOSING A SURGEON WITH WHOM YOU DON'T FEEL COMFORTABLE.

When choosing a surgeon, you should feel comfortable discussing your concerns and sense that your doctor is listening to you and addressing your desires. Without good communication, it is unlikely that you will obtain the results you want. If the initial consultation seems rushed and the doctor does not seem to have time to answer your questions, then you should consider going elsewhere and getting another opinion. Always remember that surgery is not a one-time event. There will be follow-up visits so you need to take into account that you are entering into a somewhat long-term relationship with a physician you should trust and have good rapport. This will help you with the emotional ups and downs that can follow any surgical procedure. At Premier Plastic Surgery Center, Dr. Ferrari will spend as much time as is necessary to address your concerns and give you the information you need. His service-minded and respectful staff would like to meet with you at least two or three times before your surgery to be sure they have a good understanding of your desires.

MISTAKE: FORGETTING TO ASK ABOUT COMPLICATIONS.

All procedures have risks associated with them and it is important for you to have an understanding of these risks in order to make an informed decision. In addition, do not be afraid to ask the surgeon what his or her complication rate is for the procedures in which you are interested. At Premier Plastic Surgery Center, we put your **safety first** and are very proud of our **extremely low complication rates**. In addition, we spend a sufficient amount of time going over your pre and post-operative instructions, consent forms, medications, and expected recovery so that you will have a clear understanding of the factors involved.

MISTAKE: GETTING SURGERY FOR THE WRONG REASONS.

Some people go through difficult stressful times and somehow feel that plastic surgery will correct the other difficulties they may have. Though plastic surgery may allow you to face the challenges in your life with greater confidence, it should not be viewed as a guarantee that it will fix interpersonal relationship problems. A common scenario is a person who wants to change their appearance because their “significant other” has left them for someone else. Their hope is that by changing their appearance, they may get the love of their life back. Therefore, make sure you are properly motivated and emotionally ready before undergoing any procedure. In addition, be sure no one is pressuring you to have a procedure. Obviously, other people may be glad you are having the procedure, but the basic desire needs to come from within yourself.

Patients that do the best are basically happy with themselves, but have a physical feature they would like to improve. They have realistic goals and comply with instructions given for their recovery.

MISTAKE: FORGETTING TO ASK IF YOU ARE A GOOD CANDIDATE FOR THE PROCEDURE.

During a consultation, you and your doctor may get so focused on the problem at hand that you forget to step back and analyze whether or not you are medically a good candidate for surgery. Many patients have underlying health problems that may prohibit them from getting surgery or put them at high risk for complications. Be sure you and your surgeon review all your pertinent medical history and medications before you decide to have a procedure performed. At Premier Plastic Surgery Center, if for some medical reason you are not a good candidate for the procedure you want, we will honestly let you know. Our goal is always to provide the safest care for you.

MISTAKE: CHOOSING YOUR SURGEON SOLELY ON PRICE.

Having surgery is not like buying a car in which the goal is to get the lowest price. You are paying for a service, not a product. Though cost certainly is a factor, it should not be the main deciding factor. In life, there is the old saying “You get what you pay for” and plastic surgery is no different. **“Top quality and highly skilled care at a discount price” do not exist.** If you are getting a low price, there must be a reason. No matter how you look at it, quality and skill always cost more. By reading this report, we hope you will have a greater understanding of what factors are important so that you will be able to make a more informed decision about your health care. It is hardly a bargain to have a procedure done by a poorly qualified surgeon and then need a secondary procedure to correct the errors made in the first procedure. You could easily end up paying more than double the cost than if you had made the initial proper physician choice.

MISTAKE: FAILING TO EXPLORE ALL YOUR PAYMENT OPTIONS.

With the ever increasing acceptance and demand for plastic surgery, many patients want to pay off their procedures over time. Many forget that they can get a **home equity loan** and the interest rates would be lower than if they resorted to other options. Competitive rate **credit cards** are also a fast and easy option. Another option could be **affordable monthly payments** arranged through a company which specifically caters to those interested in cosmetic surgery. The staff at Premier Plastic Surgery Center would be glad to help you through this simple, private, and hassle-free process and assist you in getting the lowest interest rates possible to fund your procedure.

MISTAKE: FAILING TO ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS.

There are many questions that will arise during your consultation (some of which have already been covered previously in this report), but consider these as well.

Is there a consultation fee?

Many surgeons don't tell you there is a fee until after they have completed the consult. Or they may claim that the consult is "free" because whatever you paid for the consult is credited towards your surgery. At Premier Plastic Surgery Center, we offer **truly free cosmetic surgery consultations** because we feel that patients should be able to get the information they need without worrying about the costs incurred.

What is my "diagnosis"?

In other words, if your physician cannot verbalize and explain to you what is aesthetically "wrong" with your face or body, then how can he or she correct the problem? For example, if your breasts are droopy or have a strange shape, the physician should be able to explain to you if you have ptosis, pseudoptosis, tuberous breasts, constricted breasts, hypoplasia, hyperplasia, inframammary fold asymmetry, etc. Without the basic knowledge of proper diagnosis, then your chances of getting the result you want are slim. In addition, does the doctor detect any asymmetries in your face and body? Most people are not symmetric and not recognizing that before surgery may lead to a suboptimal result.

Are there any other options to correct my problem?

Your physician should honestly inform you of other options that are available, even if they are not offered there. At Premier Plastic Surgery Center, Dr. Ferrari will tell you if there are options we don't offer and even refer you to other physicians if you would like to explore those options.

Have you ever had another patient with my particular situation? If so how many of these types of procedures have you done?

No physician is an expert at all types of plastic surgery problems. Therefore, it is important for you to be able to evaluate whether or not your doctor has the proper expertise you need.

Can you show me before and after photos of someone who had the procedures you recommend for me?

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then before and after photos should be able to demonstrate the desired result. When you look at the photos, try to imagine if that were you in the photos. Ask yourself if the results look natural or not.

Are these photos or your patients?

Unfortunately, some plastic surgeons will copy photos off another surgeon's website or purchase photos and use them for demonstration purposes. Make sure to ask if the doctor actually did the procedures on the patients in the photos.

Where will my surgery take place?

For surgical procedures which require sedation or general anesthesia, you will want to be sure that the facility is accredited. Accreditation indicates that certain standards for safety are met. Look for accreditation from one of the following national organizations: American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgical Facilities (AAAASF), Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), or Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC).

For the utmost in safety, Dr. Ferrari performs all major procedures in a nationally accredited facility. Most of them are performed at Presbyterian Hospital in Matthews.

Who will administer my anesthesia?

For all procedures requiring heavy sedation or general anesthesia, Dr. Ferrari only allows anesthesia to be given in an accredited facility supervised by anesthesiologists (who are M.D.'s) board certified by the American Board of Anesthesiology.

What will my recovery be like?

When undergoing surgery, it is important to have an understanding of the expected recuperation. Therefore, you will be more at ease after the procedure if you know that the things you are going through are "normal". In addition, you may need to take some time off work and have others take care of domestic issues (such as laundry, yard work, housecleaning, etc). At Premier Plastic Surgery Center, we not only review the post-operative expectations with you, we will give you written information that describes your recovery.

What are the risks involved in my procedure?

All procedures carry some level of risk. It is important for you to be able to understand those risks and how they would be handled if a complication occurred. At Premier Plastic Surgery Center, we not only explain the risks verbally, we also provide you with extensive written information well in advance of your procedure so that you will be able to make the best decision with respect to your healthcare.

What happens if I have a complication which requires a secondary procedure?

Though none of us like to think of the chances of having a complication, it is a fact of life. Everything in life has some risk attached and while we are on planet Earth, there will always be unfortunate situations that arise. At Premier Plastic Surgery Center, our complication rates for all procedures are extremely low. Dr. Ferrari stands behind his work and does not charge any surgeon's fees for secondary procedures due to complications (provided the post-operative instructions have been followed).

Will my health insurance cover any facility or anesthesia fees if I should have a complication and need additional surgery?

Though all insurance plans vary, most of them have a disclaimer that they do not cover complications associated with cosmetic surgery. You would need to check your own policy to be sure of the stipulations.

Can I talk with any of your former patients who have had this procedure?

If you need further explanation from a patient's perspective, it may be worthwhile talking to a former patient. They may offer valuable information that may have not been covered in your consultation. However, remember that patients are private individuals and respect for their time is appreciated. At Premier Plastic Surgery Center, we can arrange for phone calls with patients, but their identity and confidentiality are always protected.

Dr. Victor Ferrari and the staff of Premier Plastic Surgery Center hope this report has been helpful to you. If we can help you in any other way, please call us a 704-844-8344.