

The 'New' Face Of Plastic Surgery

By Nitya Shukla photography Jeffrey Navarro



Buzz the words ‘Cosmetic Surgery’ and within micro-seconds your mind will flash the images of major Hollywood actors, some with fuller lips, some with straighter noses, some with wrinkle-free foreheads and then a few, who had so much ‘work done’, that their new faces/bodies became a mere relic of their older selves (although they would admit otherwise). Did you know that there is a new reality show called *Bridezilla* wherein the ultimate prize is in fact a cosmetic surgery of choice? And if that’s not enough, there is always the magical Google, ready to beam up hundreds of before-and-after-surgery photographs that capture the horrors of botched-up surgeries, say for example a woman who had her face altered to look like a cat, or the guy who got his tongue parted like a lizard.

Cosmetic surgery may once have been the domain of the rich and famous, but its popularity continues to grow. Today anyone, regardless of gender, age, religion can afford the option of getting work done for their benefit. Every year, more than a million Americans seek a surgeon’s hand in achieving a flatter tummy, a larger bust, or a reshaped nose or chin – a real scenario that emerged during a discussion with Dr Ahmed Makki, Consultant Plastic Surgeon, Plastic Surgicentre. In Qatar too, some of the most popular procedures are tummy tucks, breast augmentation for women post pregnancy and non-surgical laser hair removal, botox and fillers.

Demand For Less Invasive Procedures

Today, research and technology is being developed to create less invasive procedures along with day surgeries, which don’t require the patient to stay overnight and don’t cost him weeks in recuperation.

Commenting on the trends, Dr Makki said, “A new thing that we are seeing very often these days is when patients (men/ women) who were once overweight and have lost a lot of weight (whether by diet and exercise or from gastric/stomach operations) come with excess skin or laxity in their body.”

As is well known but not often spoken about, plastic surgery actually has two branches of surgery: the aesthetic and the reconstructive. The latter can be used to treat children with anomalies like cleft lip or to construct breasts for women who have had a mastectomy after cancer, or reconstruction of the hidden neck, after burns or injuries, said Dr Makki.

Brushing aside the myth that plastic surgery is only for beauty, Dr Makki said, “Plastic surgery is much more than just a face lift. Our aim is twofold: functional improvement and then the cosmetic part. Say if a worker has burnt his hand, we do surgery to improve the function of the hand first. The aesthetic part comes later when we improve the appearance of his hand.”

Citing another example, he said that if someone has an injury on the eyelid forcing the eye lid to not function properly, we can improve the function and the



Dr Ahmed Makki, Consultant Plastic Surgeon , Plastic Surgicentre

appearance of the eye lid.

This is the 10th year of his clinic, Plastic Surgicentre which now offers surgical procedures like rhinoplasty, breast enlargement or reduction, tummy tucks, liposuction, thigh lifting, reconstructive surgery for children/adults who have suffered from a trauma. In the dermatology section, facial care, laser treatment, laser hair removal, laser for pigmentation or rejuvenation are done.

No Room For Error

To avoid landing up in botched-up surgeries, the crux is to get the doctor right. “Due to the popularity of plastic surgery, many doctors who are not qualified as surgeons are in fact doing such surgeries, not just in Qatar but also in the rest of the world. I never rush for a procedure. I first talk with my potential patients and only when I am convinced that they need the procedure, do I go ahead. Sometimes I have even convinced my patients that they don’t really need any procedure. It’s important to me that I select

patients with realistic expectations,” explained Dr Makki.

Recounting cases in which he has had to do corrective surgery, he said that the lure of cheap surgery in foreign countries might just result in a costlier correction surgery. “I always advise my patients that they should do the surgery in the country of their residence so that if there is any complication, the doctor is close by to help you sort it out immediately.” It goes without saying of course that one must research and find a good qualified experienced surgeon.

Surgery is not the permanent answer to cure obesity also. Dr Makki said that surgery should be the last option and the patient should have tried exercising and dieting and changing his lifestyle before resorting to surgery. “They should know that liposuction is not a replacement for dieting or exercising, it is not a treatment to cure obesity, it is for someone who has tried everything and when we do liposuction, it should help and encourage them to continue their choices.”