



PUTTING YOUR BEST FACE FORWARD

Today's approach to cosmetic surgery is so much more sophisticated and less invasive than in the past. ABODE spoke to leading Doha plastic surgeon Dr Ahmed Makki from the Plastic Surgicentre about the latest trends.

BY DAWN GIBSON

Do you want to get a fresher looking face in your lunch hour? How about getting rid of those stubborn love handles that refuse to budge, no matter how much exercise you do, in a procedure so easy you will be back at work the very next day?

What sounded like science fiction just a decade ago has become reality thanks to the latest developments in cosmetic surgery, reducing recovery time for many operations from weeks to days or less. Combined with an obsession in the popular media about celebrity makeovers, and the fixation we now have for taking Instagram-worthy 'selfies', it's no wonder that many people are contemplating getting a bit of work done.

TOP TRENDS

More than 20 million cosmetic procedures were performed worldwide in 2014, according to the latest report from the leading International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ISAPS). Surprisingly, the most popular surgical procedure is eyelid surgery, followed by liposuction, breast augmentation, fat grafting and rhinoplasty (nose jobs). Less surprisingly, Botox is the number one non-surgical cosmetic procedure. Other popular procedures include hyaluronic acid (filler), hair removal, chemical peels and laser skin resurfacing. Also unsurprisingly, eight out of ten procedures carried out worldwide are on women.

Dr Ahmed Makki, a Senior Consultant in Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, is the Managing Director and Founder of the busy Plastic Surgicentre in Doha. He says that demand for cosmetic surgery in Qatar is on the rise and trends here generally reflect wider international trends.

Botox is the most common procedure overall at the Plastic Surgicentre, while the most popular types of surgery are 'Mommy makeup procedures' – tummy tucks, breast surgery and other forms of surgery requested by women to get their pre-baby bodies back after pregnancy and breastfeeding. Also in demand are procedures to get rid of excess skin after weight-reduction surgery, and facial procedures such as eye lid lifts and rhinoplasty.

FASTER RECOVERY

Dr Makki says many of the procedures at his clinic can be done under local anesthetic and the patient is able to go home the same day. Even cases where a patient needs general anesthetic may only require an overnight stay. "Recovery is so much faster because of the advances we have witnessed over the past few years in anesthesia and surgical techniques," he explains. "For example, a person who had a tummy tuck 10 or 15 years ago would stay in hospital a few days, even up to a week or two weeks. These days, they may just be in for the evening or overnight. Surgery has become less invasive, recovery has become much quicker and downtime has become less – and there are many procedures that are 'lunch break' procedures like Botox and fillers."

Dr Scot Glasberg, the President of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, says medical advancements and improvements in technology were leading to a wider array of options for patients. "Subtlety has been the keyword I've heard from patients over the past year," Dr Glasberg says. "Minimally invasive procedures typically produce subtle aesthetic results and, for many people, that is all they want or need at the time."

THE CELEBRITY LOOK

Social media is having a huge influence on demand for cosmetic surgery in a number of ways. Firstly, we are 'publishing' photos of ourselves to a wide audience on a regular basis through Instagram and Facebook, so we are much more aware of our image than back in the day when the only self portraits we encountered were in family albums. Secondly, social media channels give us access to the lives of celebrities like never before. We can see what the stars are up to 24/7, whether they are on the red carpet, having a coffee in a café or jogging around the block.



In the plastic surgery office, society's obsession with celebrity translates to clients who demand lips like Angelina Jolie, eyes like Myriam Fares and the curves of Beyoncé. Dr Makki confirms that the celebrity trend is as common in Doha as anywhere else in the world. "Women come with a picture [of a celebrity they

want to look like] on their phone, whether they want a nose job, a breast augmentation or body contouring," he says. "Nowadays, I get given a lot of pictures of Kim Kardashian and Jennifer Lopez."

The increasing popularity of the 'Brazilian Butt Lift' – a bottom augmentation procedure which gives a client perkier buttocks – is a direct reflection, fuelled by larger-than-life curvy celebs like Kim K and Nicki Minaj.

TAKING A SURGI-CATION

Another big trend is the surgical vacation – many of us have at least one friend or work colleague who has gone overseas for a holiday and come back looking 'refreshed'.

Countries offering medical services at discount rates abound, though the quality of clinics varies markedly. Well-known hot-spots include the Czech Republic, Spain, Egypt, Mexico and Thailand, while Turkey, Croatia and South American countries such as Argentina and Brazil are rapidly cornering a larger slice of the market. However, venturing to another country for an operation can obviously be a risky affair. Even if the procedure goes smoothly, you need to bear in mind you will be many miles from your regular circle of support.

"My advice to anyone thinking to travel for surgery is that you should be very careful in selecting where and to whom you are going," Dr Makki says. "If you look for the cheapest deal, you may end up paying more to correct the results, and in some cases, it may not be possible to correct them. There are many medical tourism surgeries that have ended in disaster. Another important point to consider is the follow up after-surgery - who is going to do the follow up when you go back to your country?"

COSMETIC SURGERY VACATIONS

Combining surgery with a holiday to an exotic location is becoming increasingly popular. You can make big savings, but be prepared to do your homework extremely carefully. Here are some of the hot-spots:

Latin and South America

Mexico has long been a cosmetic surgery destination for neighbouring Americans, but now Brazil, Argentina and Bolivia are becoming well known for their low prices.

Turkey

Less than five hours' flying time from Doha, Turkey is a favourite destination among European medical tourists for its quality treatments at cut price rates.

India

India is another good option close to Doha. It has a significant number of high quality facilities with well-qualified English speaking surgeons.

North Africa

Egypt and Tunisia have a reputation for great deals, and you can chill at one of the tourism hot-spots around the Red Sea afterwards.

Thailand

Having a tummy tuck or an eye lid lift while on a tropical holiday in Thailand has long been popular with Australians, and now the rest of the world is catching on, too.



POPULAR PROCEDURES WORLD-WIDE

The leading surgical cosmetic procedures are:

1. Eyelid surgery
2. Liposuction
3. Breast augmentation
4. Fat grafting
5. Rhinoplasty

The leading non-surgical cosmetic procedures are:

1. Botulinum toxin (Botox)
2. Hyaluronic acid (filler)
3. Hair removal
4. Chemical peel
5. Laser skin resurfacing

Source: 2014 statistics report, International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, www.isaps.org

BEFORE UNDERTAKING ANY KIND OF COSMETIC PROCEDURE, CLIENTS ARE STRONGLY ADVISED TO DO THEIR RESEARCH TO FIND OUT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE ABOUT THE SPECIFIC PROCEDURE, INCLUDING EXPECTED RESULTS, ANY POTENTIAL COMPLICATIONS AND THE REPUTATION OF THE CLINIC. DRAW UP A LIST OF QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS WITH THE SURGEON, OUTLINING ANY CONCERNS.

KEEPING EXPECTATIONS IN CHECK

When considering any kind of cosmetic procedure, Dr Makki warns that clients need to be realistic about results – just because you think Natalie Portman’s nose is gorgeous, there’s no guarantee a similar nose will look right on you. “It sometimes needs some effort from the surgeon to educate clients, to talk to them and look at what is right for them,” Dr Makki says. “Many times I have tried to convince clients that maybe they don’t need the surgery – what they already have is much better than what they may get if we try to change them.”

There is widespread misunderstanding about what can be achieved through common procedures. For example, liposuction is not a solution for obesity – it works best on people who have already lost excess weight through diet and exercise and want extra help to get rid of remaining stubborn fatty deposits.

Dr Glasberg points to client-surgeon communication as crucial to ensuring the best results.

“Today, more than ever, patients are empowered with choices to achieve the results they are seeking,” he says. “Through open communications and a mutual understanding of expectations, patients work closely with their surgeon to determine the procedures most appropriate for them to achieve their optimal outcomes.”

To find out more about the Plastic Surgicentre, call 4466 2260 or go to www.drmaakki.com



Dr. Makki

