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TOWN & COUNTRY's Directory of Top Cosmetic Surgeons in the U.S.

So you're thinking about having cosmetic surgery. Now what? Among the many things to consider, the most important and most difficult is your choice of doctor. It's impossible to assemble a list of the "best" aesthetic surgeons across the country; there are simply too many subjective criteria. But we've compiled a list of some of the nation's top cosmetic surgeons, to be used as one resource among many. To start with, we zeroed in on certain cities where most of the cosmetic surgery is done and where many of our readers live. (Therefore, we necessarily and regretfully have left out many excellent doctors who happen to practice in other places.) To assemble our very selective list, then, we interviewed noted surgeons, surveyed more than 2,000 surgeons nationwide for their peer recommendations, sought out media sources across the country, acquired membership information from surgeons' professional associations, and perused teaching hospital faculty lists. We collected our names from many different sources, because each method on its own is insufficient. We wanted to guard against both the phenomenon of doctors simply nominating their friends, and media sources choosing the physicians with the most skillful P.R. person or best sound bites.

We tried very hard not to allow this to become a popularity contest; we became aware early in the process how hard some doctors would work to get on this list. We caught many physicians voting for themselves and soliciting the votes of friends and colleagues. We developed immunities to the mountains of publicity material and phone calls we received. Having said this, we'd also like to recognize those doctors who took the high road, cooperated with integrity and thus helped us construct what we believe is the best of all possible lists. Thank you.

After we assembled our preliminary list, we whittled it down to this final, subjective number by checking board certifications, learning about the doctor's medical training, and ascertaining whether or not the physician had a history of legal or disciplinary action against him. We're well aware that we've left out hundreds even thousands of fine surgeons across the country. If you live in an area we haven't covered in this list, please refer to Resources (page 162) for guidance. We also know that our list may not turn up the right doctor for you. Despite all our research, it wasn't possible to go into the operating room with these doctors. And we can't tell you if you'll personally like or feel comfortable with a specific surgeon, or even if your sense of aesthetics will match his or hers. No amount of research by other people can make the perfect doctor/patient pairing for you. You'll have to visit several surgeons just to see if you "click" enough to trust them with your appearance.

That's why these names are only a starting point for anyone contemplating cosmetic surgery. One of the most powerful research tools you have is the friends and colleagues who have had cosmetic surgery and are happy with the results. If you think they look good, too, you might consider a consultation with the same surgeon. Before opting for any surgery, you should schedule appointments with at least two doctors. In addition to speaking with several of their patients, you should ask to see "before" and "after" photographs of those who have had the same procedure you are considering. The pictures will showcase work the physician is proud of, and you'll have an opportunity to determine if you have the same aesthetics. A surgeon might be considered the best there is, but if you and he don't share an opinion of what looks good, he's not the right one for you. Here, then, is the stellar roster. Remember, it is just a beginning.

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