

# Plastic surgery teenagers



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## Plastic surgery among teenagers- Is it worth the risk?

- Introduction

The word plastic originates from Greek *plastikos*, which means “to mold” or “to give form”. Plastic surgery is a special type of procedure which comprises a person’s appearance and physical functional abilities. Most teens go for plastic surgery because of certain reasons. Some claim it is the impact of the society where ‘ugly’ people will be discriminated. While some are due to low self-esteem and the result of body imaging. Nevertheless, the public will commonly ask is it worth the risk for teenagers to take plastic surgery in such young age? , Is plastic surgery safe? And how can teenagers make a right choice of taking plastic surgeries? Therefore, this research paper will be giving a view at the history of plastic surgery, reasons why teenagers undergo plastic surgery, the advantages and risk of taking plastic surgery and finally conclude how can a teenage make a correct decision of taking plastic surgery.

- Types of plastic surgery

Since years, plastic surgeons have been working hard to improve patients’ self esteem and appearance through two main types of plastic surgery.

- Reconstructive surgery

Reconstructive surgery is a procedure which is done to correct or improve defects on parts of body either on appearance or function, including physical defects such as cleft lips and palates, traumatic surgeries like burns, and skin and tissue damages caused by disease or injury (Health Encyclopedia 2008).

- Cosmetic surgery

Cosmetic surgery is also known as aesthetic surgery, a surgery that can alter unattractive facial features or parts of body which a person is not satisfied with. Non surgical cosmetic surgeries like the usage of special laser to remove scars are very common among people. . Surgical cosmetic procedures such as breast implantation, rhinoplasty, and liposuction are also acceptable by the society nowadays (Hirsch 2006).

- History of plastic surgery

According to Backstein (2005), the first documented reconstructive surgery was done in 600 B. C in ancient India. Where physicians in India started to explore skills on nose repairing which is now known as rhinoplasty, results from the nose amputation as one of the Indian penal system. However, the force driving most of the plastic surgeries developments is war, when the First World War begins during the late 1800s and early 1900s (Schnur 2007). During that time, plastic surgeries are used as treatments for injurious facial wounds such as shattered jaws, blown-off nose and lips and also gaping skull wounds causes by modern weapons. The development of plastic surgery started to shoot when the United States got involve in the war in the year 1917. After the war ends, new and innovative reconstructive surgeries are desperately needed as the discharge soldiers with awful facial deformity are not able to acquire a job, find a wife or just walk down the streets like normal persons.

- Statistics of plastic surgery

According to ASPS (2007), a total of 11.8 million cosmetic procedures were done in 2007, experiencing an increase as much as 7% from the year 2006. Non-surgical cosmetic surgery or minimally-invasive cosmetic procedures covers nearly 10 million of the total procedure done whereas surgical cosmetic covers 1.8 million cases. In 11.8 million cases, 0.2 million of these cases are done on teenagers around 13 to 19 years old.

The top five surgical cosmetic surgery which teenagers have done is Rhinoplasty (38,886 procedures), breast reduction in male teenagers (16,400 procedures), breast augmentation (10,500 procedures on teenagers of age 18 to 19), otoplasty (8,062 procedures) and liposuction (4,950 procedures). Whereas Laser hair removal (67,523 procedures), laser treatment for leg veins (22,831 procedures), laser skin resurfacing (13,890 procedures), microdermabrasion (11,260 procedures) and Botox (11,023 procedures) are the top five non-surgical cosmetic surgery done on teenagers (ASPS 2007). Total 224,658 cosmetic procedures were done on teenagers in the year 2007, which is slightly more than the year 2003 which have 223,000 cosmetic procedures (Zuckerman 2005).

- Reasons why teenagers undergo plastic surgery
- Low self-esteem or self-consciousness

Teens think that plastic surgery can help them improve their self-confidence (Zuckerman 2005). Teenagers, normally think of plastic surgery when they found out themselves are not as good as the others. According to Melanie (2008), A girl named Wohl felt self-conscious of her body, comparing it to her friends who were filling out their bathing suits on the beach and Dr

Greenburg says that there are girls and women who are overwhelmed by the fact that they do not have breasts like their friends do. So, most of them don't play gymnastics or go on dates just because they cannot wear certain clothing, and these things happens almost every day. This two examples shows that teenagers use to compare themselves to their friends of the same age or even celebrities who had a wonderful appearance, this comparison results in low self esteem in teenagers and may lead them to a pessimistic life.

- Peer Pressures

According to Hirsh (2006), teens view plastic surgery as a way to fit in and look acceptable to friends and peers. Friends play an important role in teenagers' life; teenagers spent most of their time with friends and schoolmates. As a result, teens may have a thought that they want what their friends have so that they feel comfortable to go along with them. For an example, If most of the friends of a teenager have undergo plastic surgery and feel satisfy with it, then he/she will normally follow the trend, without understanding the risk that they may be taking. Other than that, even schoolmates could be the biggest reason why teenagers turn up for plastic surgery, especially in image driven college.

- Parent Encouragement

Nowadays, it is very common that parents giving plastic surgeries as their child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday or graduation gifts. Although the cost of plastic surgery are high, but parents are willing to pay just to make their child look better. " Parents now, not only scare that their kids will be left behind academically

but also aesthetically. Parents make their child get plastic surgery,” this is the opinion of Dr. Shim Hyung Bo, a plastic surgeon in Korea (Ko 2002). Most parents, who had undergone plastic surgery, will also encourage their children to do so as they are satisfied with the results. Dermatology times show that some parents desperately want liposuction or facial surgery for their teens.

- Advantages of Plastic Surgery
- Improve self esteem

Studies found that body-image satisfaction improves after plastic surgery (Zukerman 2005). Teenagers who have inheritance defects, such as having birth marks or big hips, might feel pessimistic with their abnormal appearance receiving disgust looks from friends or even other people. Plastic surgery is a way for them to build up their self-confidence, as cruel comments towards them will reduce. Healey (1999) says that breast implants boosted the self-confidence of a woman named Kent. Self-esteem is built in people who face difficulties in their life, due to their natural appearance, they had difficulties when it comes to socializing with people and they get teased. Plastic surgery can help them get rid of bad names and cruel comments from people.

- Correct Physical Defects

For teenagers who have natural birth defects such as cleft lips and palates and having breasts that are too big, they might not be leading a normal life like we do. Not only with natural birth defects, teenagers who experience serious accidents or burns which may ruin their facial and body appearance will also

have the same problem. They usually face problems such as difficulty of eating or even moving around. At this moment, plastic surgery will be appropriate for these people to help them lead a normal life like us. Mann (2001) also provide evidence, Sixteen year old Kimberly's triple D breasts may have gotten the boy's attention, but this gave her many health problems as she will feel pain even when she walks, and having neck pain when she jogs. A breast reduction changes her life, now she can exercise freely without experiencing any difficulties. This evidence shows that plastic surgery cannot be treated as making something fake over the body as it helps people to overcome certain difficulties in daily life.

- Disadvantages and Risk of Plastic Surgery
- Physical

Most studies show that there are risks behind every plastic surgery from minor effects such as permanent scarring to serious effect which some will even lead to death. There are concerns about plastic surgery on teenagers as their body is still maturing. Infections are major problem faced by teenagers, especially in the first three months after having their plastic surgery. At this moment, they may feel painful and also suffers from itchiness. Other than that, there are cases that show serious effects of plastic surgery. Marinelli (2001) says that she lost her daughter to liposuction, where her daughter, Lisa Marie went for a liposuction and end up having damage in her vein and the doctor tied her bandage too tightly cutting off her circulation. This shows that plastic surgery will cause negative effects if it is not done properly and have enough safety procedures. The seriousness of

the procedures can be seen as this should be one of the concerns people should make before making decisions of taking plastic surgeries.

- Mental Stress

When things do not turn to its right face, mostly teenagers might experience personal regret. For teenagers who are not satisfied with the results, may end up with committing suicide or having another plastic surgery in order to correct it. There is a very good example, which was Michael Jackson who had almost ruined his face to plastic surgery. Instead of having a pair of eyes and a nose that looks like his sister Janet Jackson, and also the lips that looks like Latoya Jackson who is also one of his sisters, he now having a funny combination on his face with a totally destroyed nose. He too went for lightening of his skin. On the other hand, teenagers might be facing the addiction of having plastic surgery. Teenagers also might have to overcome the trauma of having surgical procedures.

Before and after photo of Michael Jackson

Source: [www.bluestarchronicles.com](http://www.bluestarchronicles.com)

- Cost

Cost of plastic surgery is not cheap Just a simple cheek implant will cost about \$500 to \$1500. Popular surgery such as rhinoplasty, liposuction and breast implants will most probably cost above \$1200 (Healey 1999).

Teenagers may not afford the cost of having plastic surgery, which cause them taking part-time job, or even burdening their parents. Most plastic surgery cost are not covered by insurance, when anything goes wrong, there will be an additional cost for repairing it, especially facial procedures.

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- How can teenagers make a right choice of taking plastic surgery?

Firstly, Teenager's own desire for plastic surgical improvement must be clearly expressed, she/he must have a goal of realistic and also have sufficient maturity before she can head to plastic surgery. Second, Parents should have a counseling session face to face with their children to know what their children really want. When the above task is completed, and yet teenagers still insist of having plastic surgery, contact a qualified plastic surgeon and have another counseling session by physiological test to qualified teenagers to have plastic surgery. According to Mann 2001, there are certain characteristic of teenagers who are poor candidates for plastic surgery such as teenagers who are encourage by friends and families when they are not interested in plastic surgery. Teenagers have the tendency to follow trends, they usually listen to what their peers says and just follow them without noticing any risks. They should undergo different section of counseling before making decision as this will affect their whole life.

- Conclusion

Teenagers usually make decision to take plastic surgery before considering the risk of it. Most of them are just immature enough to think about certain factors which may cause them a life-long effect. According to this research report, the risk of plastic surgery is too big for teenagers who have just step into their life. In conclusion, it does not worth the risk for a teen to have plastic surgery in the early age just to improve his/her appearance. As they have to consider the risk if the surgery goes wrong, that will be a life-long .