

# the PRICE of the SURGERY

The range of aesthetic surgery available is very wide, therefore, before undergoing any operation, it is very important for each patient to make sure that the surgeon he or she is going to consult really is an aesthetic-plastic surgeon, by means of a very simple method: you have only to ask the doctor to show his membership card of the Professional Association of Doctors, which will indicate his name, his speciality and his membership number.

Firstly we shall clarify the difference with a cosmetic surgeon, who is a general practitioner who has studied aesthetic procedures after completing his university course; he has no further experience in the field of surgery. As opposed to an aesthetic-plastic surgeon who has studied medicine, but has also spent several years specializing in plastic and reconstructive surgery in the hospital and then has studied aesthetic surgery. Having said this, we must point out that this training does not exclude the risk of coming across a "bad" aesthetic-plastic surgeon, but when in doubt, you should bear in mind that the latter will always be more capacitated than a cosmetic surgeon to correct any possible errors.

## A passion for quality

Once sure that you have chosen a real aesthetic-plastic surgeon, the most important thing is the patient's intuition as to whether the doctor consulted is a technician, an artist, or both. Because surgery is an art that requires passion. But how can we interpret the price to be paid for making adjustments to the face or body? What does the price relate to, and what justifies the price differences from one specialist to another?

In principle, for a "serious" surgeon, the cost of an operation should be set according to the time taken and the difficulty in carrying it out. For example, it is easier to do a liposuction and breast implants than to do a face lift or a rhinoplasty (nose reshaping), and it is quite normal for the first two examples to be less expensive.

But now that the courts are ruling according to the obligation of giving results, patients are not paying more for the operation, but for the results. Therefore this evaluation is not enough, because it only refers to the results and in this respect there are enormous differences between surgeons. Differences in anaesthetic techniques, differences in operating technique with relation to the traumatic aspect and the consequences in the post operative phase, and finally, differences in the duration of the results with respect to time.

It is worth knowing that a general anaesthetic is not particularly advisable because it means the surgeon has to work without any kind of reaction from the patient, and therefore this gives rise to the possibility of the tissue not being handled very gently. As opposed to this, a local anaesthetic with sedation means the patient is unaware of what is happening for the whole duration of the operation, but his body can react unconsciously, thus 'informing' the surgeon about the force with which he is using his instruments, in the event of any damage being caused to the area on which he is working. Furthermore, when working with local anaesthetic and sedation, the surgeon must be prepared to lose time in order for the anaesthetic to penetrate the area, but in turn the haemorrhage will be reduced by 70% because the product used to penetrate contains adrenalin, which causes the constriction of the blood vessels.

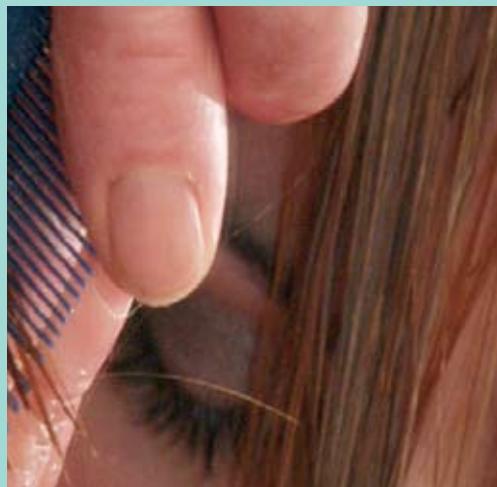
It is undeniably true that surgeons who are used to working with local anaesthetic and sedation respect the tissue more than others, and the effects are evident in a lighter and quicker post operative.

Finally, the most important thing: the aesthetic result also depends on the choice of the best strategy for the part of the face or body that you wish to alter. Take the example of a lifting, that can be performed in a three-hour operation by removing excess skin, or by a much more complicated process lasting up to nine hours, working at a deeper level on muscles and fat. In the second case the result will be much better and the scars less visible, and of course it is more expensive, even though it is still a lifting. We could say that this comparison is in plastic surgery, like comparing ready-to-wear clothes and haute couture in the fashion world.



Another very illustrative example is that of botox or the new *Vistabel*. This famous product, that achieves a temporary relaxation of the muscles that cause wrinkles, comes in a bottle in the form of a freeze-dried powder, which is the botulinum toxin. In order to inject it under the skin and into the muscles, it is usually mixed with saline solution and, depending on the dosage of solution used to dilute it, can treat up to 6 patients. Obviously a doctor who treats only one patient with the dosage will charge more than a doctor who treats six, but with the first, the results will be longer-lasting than with the second. However, the doctor who treats six patients is only half as cheap as the other, even though he is applying the treatment six times. In the end, the doctor who appears to be cheaper, will be charging up to two and a half times more per bottle of product than the doctor who appears to be more expensive, even though his injection will last less than half the time of the more expensive injection.

This is basically why there is such a difference in prices between surgeons, and for this reason it is not advisable for the patient to make his choice of the specialist who is to operate, based solely on the price given.



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