

Need a Little Lift?

Cosmetic Surgery Can Boost Your Spirits (And Your Face)

By Elizabeth Sweeten

THE THOUGHT HAS CROSSED YOUR MIND. Maybe it's more of a guilty fantasy. Just a little ... something. Around the eyes, perhaps? Those "laugh" lines around your mouth (which aren't so funny, after all). That worry-crease above the bridge of your nose that can be attributed to last year's merger...

There are ways to peel off a few layers and a few years; to erase a little of Father Time's attention and the sun's damage; to lessen the look of worry and plump the appearance of vitality. With today's advances in minor cosmetic procedures and the ease and affordability of services, there's almost no reason not to investigate. Unless you like those furrows in your brow.

New Trends in Cosmetic Surgery

Demand for minor cosmetic surgeries is on the rise. Both men and women are consulting with experts at facilities like The Aesthetic Institute and Laser Center at the Gateway in downtown Salt Lake City or Elase Medical Spas in St. George, Orem and South Jordan (with new locations opening soon in Bountiful and Sugar House).

In addition to dedicated surgery centers, Utah is home to many excellent physicians and aestheticians who offer a variety of cosmetic procedures, and treatments are more affordable than ever. "These types of procedures are much more affordable than people think they are," says Dr. James A. Brinton, who has practiced medicine for more than 26 years and is now the medical director of Elase Medical Spas. "Almost all of our services are under \$1,000, with the average cost of a service around \$300 to \$400."

Board-certified dermatologist Dr. Mark B. Taylor of The Aesthetic Institute, a practicing physician in Utah for the past 28 years, sees an increase in demand for cosmetic procedures. "Some of our more popular treatments are the treatment of spider veins, facial tightening with a new laser procedure we've developed, tumescent liposuction and treatment for scars and birthmarks," he says. Other popular procedures include light and laser facials, hair removal, chemical peels and tattoo removal, which "is becoming more popular with the number of tattoos that have been put on over the past couple decades," Taylor explains. "Laser resurfacing is a fantastic procedure for people with significant wrinkles who want to look 20 years younger and are willing to invest a week or two of recovery time." Botox® and fillers to enhance lips are the most popular procedures, offered at reasonable prices with little recovery time.

About 85 percent of clients at the Aesthetic Institute are women, according to Taylor, but the number of men undergoing treatment is increasing. "Baby boomers want to look as young as they can, so we're seeing more and more men as time goes on."

Brinton sees about 70 percent women and 30 percent men for hair removal. "Surprisingly, a lot of men are interested in having Botox® done on their foreheads," he says. "Our target demographic for anti-wrinkle treatments is about 35 to 55. For hair removal, it's a little bit younger, starting about 20 to about age 35."

Risk and Recovery

Technological advances have shortened recovery times and decreased the inconvenience of surgery. "With a lot of our treatments, there is no down time" explains Taylor. Laser eyelid surgery takes about three days of recovery time. With tumescent liposuction, people have about one day of down time. Laser resurfacing can take up to two weeks, and for acne laser peels for scars, down time is about a week. For Botox, fuller lips, light facials, eyelid tightening, hair and tattoo removal, there is no down time.

Taylor assures patients that there is very little risk for minor procedures like Botox®, hair removal and facials. "The more complicated procedures like laser resurfacing require a lot of experience to do them right, but the risks are fairly minimal," he says. Taylor and his team can also screen patients for skin cancer and more serious issues. "Not all cosmetic problems may be benign," he advises. "Some of those spots that people don't like the look of may need to be treated medically."

"There are very few risks," concurs Brinton. "Any side effects are temporary; there are no known permanent side effects. You hear horror stories about scars and burns from the laser, but that only happens if [providers] are negligent or don't know what they're doing." Brinton encourages consumers to research practitioners before committing to surgery. "It is such a popular industry and it's growing so fast, a lot of people are trying to jump into the industry without knowing what they are doing or without the appropriate training. Price is not the only factor. Look at the experience level and the medical supervision available at the facility."

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