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PLASTIC SURGERY

by **KenMcEntee**
Contributing Writer

Plastic surgery to improve conditions of the face, breasts and mid-section are increasing in popularity as techniques become more advanced and convenient, says Dr. Vasu Pandrangi, a board-certified plastic surgeon at Southwest General.

A recent study by the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) suggests that interest in cosmetic makeovers is up substantially. Many popular procedures can now be done on an outpatient basis, with a shorter recovery time than in the past. That makes them more convenient and accessible to people—mostly women, Dr. Pandrangi says—who want to look better and improve their self-confidence. An increasing number of people are seeking cosmetic changes to increase their chances in a competitive job market.

“The important thing when deciding on having cosmetic surgery is what is the patients’ desired outcome and whether that outcome is obtainable,” he explains. “It is beneficial when you can recognize positive



results that will improve a patient’s life.”

Among the most popular plastic surgery procedures being done today include the removal of excess skin and wrinkles in the face and fat under the neck; breast enlargement, lift and reduction, and reconstruction; and contouring of the midsection, including tummy tucks and liposuction.

“Once people pass the age of 35 or 40 they start to develop jowls, wrinkles on the forehead and crow’s feet around the eyes,” Dr. Pandrangi says. “In the past many of these conditions required surgery, but we have a lot of in-office procedures, like Botox injections, available now for the removal of wrinkles. Tissue fillers such as juvéderm, restylane, are helpful in filling the hollowed areas around the lips and forehead.”

The removal of excess skin and fat under the chin, which once required hospital stays, are now typically done with outpatient surgery, Dr. Pandrangi says.

Women considering breast enlargement can choose between saline or silicon implants.

“After 10 years, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has brought back silicone implants and they have been found to be safe and effective,” Dr. Pandrangi says.

Although silicon feels more like natural tissue than saline implants, he says, some women may opt for saline due to anxiety about past safety concerns with silicon implants. Saline implants also generally cost less.

“Many women choose to firm their breasts without necessarily increasing the size after giving birth,” he says. “After giving birth to children, drooping and sagging tends to occur. But it can be easily corrected.”

A tummy tuck can dramatically reduce the appearance of a protruding abdomen by removing excess skin and fat and tightening the muscles.

Among the most exciting new developments in plastic surgery, Dr. Pandrangi says, is the drainless tummy tuck. He says he is the only plastic surgeon in the Cleveland area who is performing the procedure.

A tummy tuck can dramatically reduce the appearance of a protruding abdomen by removing excess skin and fat and tightening the muscles. During the traditional procedure, drain tubes are placed in the abdomen to drain fluids that accumulate in the process.

“Drains are bothersome and painful and patients hate them,” Dr. Pandrangi says.

“I avoid them by performing liposuction first, leaving the lymphatics and vascular structures intact to drain fluids naturally through the bodily system.”

Liposuction, a procedure that removes localized fat from abdomen and other areas, should be used only to contour the body—not as a weight-loss method, Dr. Pandrangi says.

When considering plastic surgery, a person should find a surgeon he or she is comfortable with, do plenty of research and should not hesitate to ask plenty of questions. The ASPS website (www.plasticsurgery.org) is a good resource.

“When you consult with a plastic surgeon, be honest about what you want to accomplish,” Dr. Pandrangi advises. “A lot of people aren’t comfortable talking about their objectives for wanting cosmetic surgery. Being honest helps the surgeon to know what you want to achieve and is better able to offer suggestions and options.”

In case you’ve wondered, plastic surgery doesn’t involve the use of plastic, the petroleum based polymer. The procedure refers to the Greek word “plastikos,” which means to mould or shape.

Dr. Vasu Pandrangi specializes in plastic and reconstructive surgery. To learn more, please call Southwest General’s Health Connection at 440-816-5050.



Women's Health

Valuable health tips from David Seals, MD, a Southwest General obstetrician/gynecologist.

by **KenMcEntee**
Contributing Writer

National guidelines for frequency of Pap smears and mammograms have changed recently. But even if you choose to space out these important tests, you should still make an annual visit to your gynecologist, advises David Seals, MD, an obstetrician/gynecologist at Southwest General.

Routine exams and testing are keys to maintaining a lifetime of health, Dr. Seals advises.



David Seals, MD

Generally, he says, annual gynecological exams should begin by the time a woman is 21 years old, or within two or three years of becoming sexually active, whichever comes first.

However, a teenager who experiences irregular or uncomfortable cycles, or who has not had a cycle by the time she is 16 years old, should schedule a visit to her doctor.

Most pediatricians will continue to see patients up to the age of 21, and are able to deal with gynecological issues. But if a patient prefers to see a gynecologist for those issues, Dr. Seals suggests choosing a doctor she is comfortable with for care.

"It's important to know that you're not stuck with the first doctor you choose," he says. "If you are not comfortable, then try somebody else. There are doctors out there who specialize in gynecological issues involving adolescents."

Additionally, Dr. Seals notes, gynecologists are not restricted to diagnosing and treating disorders of the reproductive organs.

"Most of us are very comfortable serving as general practitioners for women and treating the full range of conditions women will encounter throughout their lives," he says. "You don't have to have two different doctors."

Once you select a physician, Dr. Seals suggests pursuing some basic preventive medicine steps.

Dr. Seals recommends that girls be vaccinated against genital human papillomavirus (HPV) before they become sexually active. The series of three vaccinations, which protect against viruses linked to cervical cancer and genital warts, can be given to girls as young as nine years old.

"The vaccinations are 99 percent effective in preventing abnormal Pap smears in the future," Dr. Seals says.

Along with annual exams, Dr. Seals says regular Pap smears and mammograms are essential in detecting early signs of cancer and other conditions.

"Once you reach the age of 21, we

recommend an annual gynecological exam that includes a pap smear, and depending on your risk factors, an annual screening for Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)," Dr. Seals suggests. "Annual visits should continue throughout your adult life. If you are low risk and not found to be a carrier of a high-risk HPV, then you may be able to space out your Pap smears. But you should continue to have an examination every year."

New guidelines from the American Society of Colposcopy have delayed the suggested age for first Pap smear from 18 to 21 years, or within two or three years of becoming sexually active.

However, all doctors don't agree with the changes, and despite the guidelines, if you want to have an annual Pap smear done, your doctor will do it.

"Most insurance providers will cover an annual Pap smear," Dr. Seals says.

Although the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force last fall issued national guidelines that suggest women get their first mammogram at age 50, Dr. Seals still recommends a baseline mammogram at age 40, with follow-up mammograms every two years, and annual mammograms beginning after age 45.

Women with a family or personal history of

cancer are encouraged to get Pap smears and mammograms more frequently.

"Low-risk women between the ages of 60 and 65 can probably stop having Pap smears," Dr. Seals says. "But they should continue to visit their gynecologist, as the 60s is the peak age for breast and ovarian cancer."

As women approach menopause, a reduction in their estrogen levels may increase their risk of cancer, heart disease and bone density loss.

Also, Dr. Seals suggests, that at the age of 50, women (and men) should have a colonoscopy to test for early signs of colon cancer.

Dr. David Seals is an obstetrician/gynecologist at Southwest General who offers care for women from adolescence through menopause. His special interests include general obstetrics and gynecology, contraception management and control of abnormal bleeding. For an appointment with Dr. Seals or to learn more about gynecological health, call Health Connection at 440-816-5050.



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Meet the Doctor

Want to get to know Dr. David Seals a little better? Visit us at www.facebook.com/SWGeneral and click on the "Note" tab for a glimpse into the man behind the lab coat. Learn more about his love of traveling and mountain climbing and what inspired him to become a physician.

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