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These Popular Cosmetic Procedures Aren't as Safe as You Think

The name of the game today in cosmetic surgery is fast and non-invasive. The reasons are obvious. Nobody wants to be bedridden, out of work, and off the social grid as they recover. Fast results of a thinner, tighter, younger look within an hour are very alluring, but, how many of these “miracle procedures” actually do what they claim to?

4 popular cosmetic procedures

Here is a review of some of the most popular:

- *Kybella*

This injection is made of deoxycholic acid, which is actually produced by the body naturally to absorb fat. The synthetic version is a fat cell destroyer injected into the pocket of fat below the chin. So far, this is the only location on the body for which Kybella is FDA-approved. It is important to keep in mind that Kybella may shrink fat, but it's also an acid which could burn the skin and cause an abscess or an open wound if placed too close to the skin. Equally important is that it can also destroy the deeper tissues as well which could lead to a dent just under the chin. Another issue with Kybella is the potential for "redistribution of fat" to other areas of the neck when people gain weight over time. The loss of fat in this focused Kybella-injected spot will look odd when areas around it are heavier looking.

- *Instabreast*

If you've ever considered a breast augmentation, it's not hard to understand the appeal of "test-driving" a pair of implants for a day. This "try it before you buy it" procedure called Instabreast takes about twenty minutes in the office. A saline solution is injected into the breasts until they are enlarged to the desired size. Surgeons who offer the procedure claim that it takes the guesswork out of planning an augmentation by providing patients with 24 hours of experience with larger breasts.

I think this is crazy!! How do you anesthetize the breast before you shoot in the saline? How can a surgeon possibly inflate a young, tight skinned, A-cup woman who wants a full C-cup without causing a lot of pain during that injection? Just the thought of it would scare off my patients. Additionally, implants on top of the muscle versus under the muscle look different, and the size you use on top looks totally different from the one you would use under the muscle. In addition, I am

worried about the safety of injecting saline under the muscle in an office-based setting with only local anesthetic. It seems like a recipe for a punctured lung!

- *Mesotherapy and lipodissolve as a fat dissolver*

Several cosmetic surgeons and dermatologists agree that if there is one procedure to avoid when shopping for a slimmer look, it's one called lipodissolve, a procedure I strongly believe is ill-advised. It involves giving a shot that claims to dissolve away stubborn fat deposits. This shot is often part of "mesotherapy;" a shallow injection of a cocktail of substances using a fine needle. There is really not a single scientific study to show that it definitely works. Are these chemicals safe when injected into fat? What happens to this fat? Where does it go? It involves the non-FDA-approved use of a material called lipostabil, which can dissolve fat and other structures, however, it can cause pain, swelling, hard lumps, ulceration of the skin, and contour irregularities. None of the pharmaceuticals used for injection are FDA approved.

- *Laser liposuction*

It seems like everything that has the word "laser" in it today is perceived as a state-of-the-art breakthrough, but in this case, using laser to assist in liposuction is not necessarily so. Laser liposuction uses lasers to liquefy the fat before it is removed, making it easier to vacuum out. They may also stimulate the production of collagen and elastin which results in firmer, tighter, and smoother skin. Lasers may also coagulate small blood vessels in the area, which translates to less bruising. What's the downside? There is a greater risk of burning and, therefore, pain. Laser liposuction, Smartlipo, and similar procedures add both time and money to the typical technique.

The bottom line

So, there you go. Although these procedures are fast and not as invasive as having a surgical procedure, they have significant downsides, including pain, poor cosmetic outcomes, and, in some cases, a risk of serious side effects, such as infection.

If you are thinking about having a cosmetic procedure and it seems to be too good to be true, chances are....it is.

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Dr. Kirk Brandow is a board certified plastic surgeon with practices in the Philadelphia metro area. Named a "Top Doc" in Plastic Surgery by Philadelphia Magazine as well as nationally recognized as one of America's "Best Plastic Surgeons" of this decade, Dr. Brandow is a trusted expert who has developed many innovative, minimally invasive procedures for the face, body, and skin. These procedures include the Boomer Lift™, the 48 Hour Facelift™, the Scarless Breast Implant, the Multilayered Micro-Lipo Augmentation, the Tumescence Technique for Liposuction, and the CO2 Laser Blepharoplasty. Dr. Brandow served as an Associate Editor of the International Journal of Aesthetic and Restorative Surgery as well as a preceptor for many live surgical training conferences, where he helped teach other doctors advanced techniques in Cosmetic Surgery.