

A Consultation Overview

For many patients the most difficult step toward achieving their cosmetic surgery goal is the first step across the threshold of the surgeon's office door. It can require a lot of **courage and determination** to make the phone call, schedule a consult visit and show up for it. This article will walk you, the prospective patient, through the consultation experience – at least how we approach the process in our office - to help dispel misconceptions and allay unfounded fears.

First, a few thoughts about choosing a plastic surgeon. The most important step is ensuring that you are selecting a surgeon certified by the **American Board of Plastic Surgery**. Be aware of subtle differences in the language. The terms “cosmetic surgeon,” “facial plastic surgeon,” and others are not the same thing and do not indicate completion of a training program approved by the American Board of Medical Specialties. Only Board Certified Plastic Surgeons may be members of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons or the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery. You can see the logos of those two organizations at the bottom of this page.

You may also wish to explore your surgeon's areas of **experience and expertise**. Most plastic surgeons, myself included, eventually settle into a relatively small number of procedures we do very frequently. The advantages of significant experience with a procedure are smoothness, limitation of tissue trauma, and potentially decreased time in the operating room. All of which can make your experience easier.

All of our consultations begin with an overall assessment of your health. Medications, supplements, previous surgeries, and other health conditions are reviewed. Although plastic surgery is frequently done only for appearance sake, it is important to keep in mind that it is still a surgical procedure. Safety and care of the overall patient remain paramount and our office takes this seriously.

Photographs are typically obtained and used for two purposes. First,

they are a record of your before-surgery appearance. Also, our office uses them for **digital imaging**. This computer simulation presents you with a projected view of what you will look like after surgery. We have found imaging to be one of the most useful tools to increase patient understanding since it can demonstrate what the procedure will, and will not, accomplish. Photographs are always held confidential unless written permission is granted by the patient for their release in any capacity.



Time spent with the surgeon is primarily devoted to a discussion of **your goals and concerns** about the desired procedure. There might be several options which could range from non-surgical procedures to classic surgical choices. During consultation, my job as surgeon is not to deliver a sales pitch, but rather explain the available options as well as their advantages and disadvantages. If the consultation has been successful, you should leave with a full understanding of the risks and benefits of each of the choices. While patients may be able to learn a lot online, there is no substitute for a discussion with a surgeon who has a practical, experienced viewpoint and a broad understanding of the techniques.

Just as the procedure discussion should focus on the facts, the **financial arrangements** should be transparent and as accurate as possible. All of our cosmetic surgery patients are provided with an itemized quote at the completion of the consultation. If patients choose to look at the available surgical dates on the calendar, they may do so, or they may determine that later. We seek to provide a no pressure environment.

Remember that you are the customer and you **should feel comfortable and confident** in your choices. While we cannot eliminate some anxiety from the process, our job is to create as smooth a path as possible to achieving your goals.

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David S. Kirn, M.D., F.A.C.S.
kirnplasticsurgery.com



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Dr. David Kirn is a Board Certified Plastic Surgeon who is devoted to advanced techniques in Cosmetic Surgery of the Face, Breast, and Body. In private practice since 1998, he is located in a state of the art facility which includes a full service skin care center. The practice is focused on personalized patient care and attention to detail. Where possible, Dr. Kirn utilizes minimally invasive procedures. The goal is to deliver quality clinical results while minimizing patient recovery time. Examples of this include a no-drain tummy tuck, armpit incision breast augmentation with gel or saline implants, fat grafting, and a short scar facelift. In addition, Dr. Kirn and nurse-injectors Carey Sanders, RN and Shirley Ramsey DNP, APRN, offer a full spectrum of non-surgical treatments such as Botox®, Dysport®, Restylane®, Juvederm®, Voluma®, Radiesse®, Kybella® & laser.