

BEAUTY

5 things you should know before you consider a cosmetic procedure.

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Whether you want to blame social media or pile it all on old mate Kylie Jenner, we live in an age where getting a cosmetic treatment is becoming almost as normal as getting your hair done. And it doesn't look like the fixation is slowing down anytime soon.

According to the [Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery](#), each year Australians spend approximately \$1 billion on cosmetic treatments. Surprising? Not really.

"There is no doubt that we are currently living in a time that cosmetic treatments and surgical procedures are in high demand," said Senior Nurse and Owner of [Absolute Cosmetic Medicine](#), Stephanie Murray.

"It is beyond question, social media, television, YouTube, Snapchat and TikTok (to name a few) have encouraged many people to look closer at their appearance, after scrolling through never-ending content, on a daily basis of filtered images of celebrities and today's influencers."

Some of the most popular procedures include anti-wrinkle injections, dermal fillers, laser hair removal, breast augmentation and liposuction.

As well as increased screen time, Senior Nurse Stephanie said it is also more attainable than ever to access cosmetic treatments.

"We offer payment plans including Afterpay, alike almost every other service out there, making it very convenient."

However, as the popularity of cosmetic surgery continues to rise, so too does the number of messed-up procedures. Because while the stuff on the television series *Botched* seems pretty insane, shady cosmetic work is actually way more common than you might think - it's literally a revolving door.

Why is it so common? Well, pretty much anyone with a medical degree is legally allowed to perform cosmetic surgical procedures in Australia.

Scary much?

As you would probably guess, this lack of regulation can lead to some really serious issues.

Whether it's due to the lack of regulation in the cosmetic industry, patient research and education, flashy marketing and cheap deals, inexperience or a combination of all of the above - there's no denying that we're going into some really dangerous territory in the world of cosmetic surgery.

So, what's the go? If you're thinking about getting a cosmetic treatment, how do you avoid this kinda stuff?

Well, there are a few things you need to know. We asked Stephanie to tell us absolutely everything you should do before committing to a treatment.

1. Do your research on the clinic.

So, how do you know if a clinic is legit? Well, you need to do your homework.

"When choosing a cosmetic clinic, it is important to check the training of practitioners, validity of the products being used and the hygiene standards of the clinic," said Stephanie.

Some key things to look out for include the experience and level of training completed by staff. Don't be afraid to ask a practitioner for their exact (not combined) experience and how often they perform the procedure that you are considering.

"When choosing an injector or cosmetic doctor, experience and qualifications of the practitioner, along with licensing of the clinic should be focused on to ensure both safety and great results," said Stephanie.

You can also check if they are a member of an industry board, such as the [Cosmetic Physicians' College of Australia \(CPCA\)](#), which represents clinicians who are trained to perform non-surgical cosmetic operations such as fillers and anti-wrinkle injections.

If you're undergoing a more advanced procedure like a breast augmentation, make sure the practitioner is a member of [The Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery \(ASSC\)](#).

Another key thing is to make sure the clinic has a full-time doctor on-site. "Check to see if it is a doctor-owned clinic, or if a doctor is involved throughout the stages of your appointment (consent, after-care etc.)," said Stephanie.

Also, be aware of clinics that have non-sterile environments or lack of care for hygiene. "Absolute Cosmetic is a Health Department Licensed Day Hospital," said Stephanie. "This means that we are required to adhere to strict infection control guidelines and undergo regular audits."

Lastly, check you're not dealing with a 'dysmorphic' practice - that is, a clinic that displays behaviours related to negative self-image. Unfortunately, there are some clinics out there that take advantage of body image issues, low self-esteem or mental health concerns. If it doesn't feel right, it's not right.

2. Make sure you have a face-to-face consultation before getting a cosmetic procedure.

"The consult is undoubtedly the most important part of the process," said Stephanie. "Not only is this a legal requirement before treatment, but the consultation is also key in determining the most suitable and beneficial plan for you, to receive the best possible outcome."

This is your chance to ask ALL the questions, you guys. A consultation will not only help you find someone who is qualified (all that stuff we talked about above) to perform your procedure safely and successfully, but also someone you feel comfortable with.

"Building a trusted and comfortable relationship with between patient and practitioner is an essential part of the process," said Stephanie.

This is also the best time for you to learn about your procedure options and discuss any complications and risks.

"This allows your practitioner to take into consideration any possible health risks from medications you might be taking, and to also provide an accurate and realistic recommendation once learning your goals," adds Stephanie.

Another great tip is to make sure your practitioner looks at your entire face during your consultation, rather than only being interested in the treatment you are planning to have. So, make a note of this.

Above all, make sure you have not felt 'rushed' into making a decision, and you have the opportunity of a second complimentary consultation.

"To allow for patients to further consider their options is a good sign that you can make a well-informed decision as opposed to being talked into a procedure on the day of your arrival," said Stephanie.

3. Ask for before and after pictures.

Yep - the old adage 'a picture is worth a thousand words' is true.

To save yourself from a nasty surprise, always ask to see before and after photos of the practitioner's work. This will give you an accurate representation of their skill and aesthetic sense, while also managing your expectations.

If they don't have any examples to show you, get yourself outta there. "Everyone should have a portfolio," said the Senior Nurse.

4. Know the risks associated with your cosmetic procedure.

Whether you're opting for a surgical or non-surgical treatment, it's crucial to remember that every procedure carries risks - this is a medical treatment, so make sure you go through these with your practitioner.

"It is important for all our patients to understand they are undergoing a medical procedure, even though the field is considered cosmetic," said Stephanie. "There are risks involved with any treatment, and it important to raise any concerns to your practitioner at the time of the consult."

Yes - even injectable treatments.

"It has been previously noted by the TGA, that risks associated with [cosmetic injectables](#) can be related to both the product and the experience of the practitioner performing the procedure," said Stephanie.

While some of the less severe side effects can include things like redness, swelling, acne and bruising, the serious risks are frightening.

This includes permanent blindness. And it doesn't just relate to injectables near your eyes.

"This can occur when dermal filler is injected into an artery, often by an inexperienced injector. The face has 'high risk' areas (i.e. nose, temples, and frown), however this risk can occur when filler is injected in any area of the face, not only limited to procedures close to the eye."

Another major complication is skin necrosis (death of tissue), which Stephanie said occurs from 'overfilling' (when too much filler has been injected).

"Many patients are tempted to chase cheaper deals overseas. It is important to remember that although cosmetic procedures are elective, when undergoing a surgical procedure and the recovery time is no time for a holiday. Complications after surgery can happen anywhere, however, the risks are increased after travelling."

5. Steer clear of flashy marketing and cheap deals.

As the old saying goes, you get what you pay for - and cosmetic treatments aren't something you want to cheap out on. Seriously.

If there's some dodgy spa down the road that has a 'special deal' on, it ain't good - because people who have a good reputation won't do this kinda stuff.

"Sometimes big discounts may end up costing your more in the long run," said Stephanie. "If the price seems too good to be true, it most likely is."

Told ya.

"Choose wisely and research before you book an appointment. Remember that cheap is not always best, or safe."

Now, read that line again.

"Additionally, ensure you are fully informed before undergoing any type of treatment," said Stephanie. "If you have questions, always ask. It is important to feel comfortable with your practitioner and aware of the procedure, results, after-care, potential side effects and risks."

Feature image: Getty