

# SHE ASKED FOR IT ... She Got It ... SHE LOVES IT!

by Ginger Tafoya

*A*s children we read of the travels of Ponce de Leon seeking that ever-elusive Fountain of Youth. But these days, the search has changed directions. It is no longer sought in the peaceful pool of a secret garden, the humble dwelling of a holy man on a majestic mountain or a potent plant in a steamy jungle. Instead, that *Oh, so youthful look* is now recaptured at the doorstep of the medical profession.

## THE CONSULTATION

Mary H. is in her mid 50s. Time and gravity have taken their toll, and she has decided it's time for a facelift and some liposuction. She does her homework and selects Dr. Goesel Anson, a Las Vegas board certified plastic surgeon. A consultation is set up between Mary and Dr. Anson, which will take approximately 1 to 1 1/2 hours.

Dr. Anson first takes a basic medical history from Mary. Mary has no problems that would prohibit the procedures. Then Mary and the doctor move to a full-length mirror, and Dr. Anson asks Mary to show her what she considers problem areas. Mary describes her chin as disappearing, her cheeks no longer have a sculptured look, and she points out what she calls "my turkey neck." She then moves on to

her body. "I would also like liposuction to be done on my hips, and inner and outer thighs," says Mary.

The doctor explains that some things can be done in combination and some can't, but Mary's can all be done at the same time. She also explains that what she's looking to do for Mary is to "rejuvenate her look as opposed to changing appearance. The changes should be subtle. When I show you what results you can get with your facelift, you can count on that, but don't forget the problems will come back over time, but it will take longer."

Dr. Anson goes on to describe to Mary the procedures she will use in the facelift and the liposuction, showing her in front of the mirror what will be done. She explains that an operating room is on the premises. "After the procedures, which will take approximately five hours, you'll be transferred to a room so we can keep an eye on you for a while. Then you'll go home to recover."

Dr. Anson then informs Mary of risks and/or complications that are possible with these procedures. "The risks are very minimal," she explains, "so it's important to keep bad things in perspective, but it's essential that you know them in making your decisions."

At the end of the consultation, Mary is satisfied and confident in her choice, and she schedules the date for her facelift and liposuction.

## THE OPERATION AND RECOVERY DAY 1:

*Mary:* I arrive at the surgery center at 7 a.m. I'm given some blue booties, and my blood pressure and pulse are taken. A warm blanket is placed over me. My anesthesiologist, Dr. Joe Soderburg prepares to put me out. He's friendly, approachable and not hard on the eyes. Dr. Anson comes in. She's friendly and exudes confidence. The entire scene relaxes me. She takes pictures and begins marking my body for incision placement.

I'm still under the anesthesia when I'm taken to the recovery room. I awake at 4 p.m., and I'm alert and not nauseated. The nurses take me to the rest

room to urinate. I have no problems, and I feel no pain or discomfort other than my head feels somewhat heavy. At 5 p.m. a friend arrives for me, and I walk out on my own power.

I continue to remain awake once I arrive home, and I'm able to eat moistened saltine crackers and drink lukewarm soup out of a cup (I'm not suppose to drink from a straw). I'm able to walk on my own to the rest room and lower myself to a sitting position. I'm keeping my legs in an elevated position and on a scale from 1 to 10, I'd say my discomfort level for the liposuction is around 6.

My facelift is somewhat different in terms of the discomfort level: It's more between a level of 7 to 8 as my lips feel dry, my throat has a slightly grainy feeling and is tight. I have very little swelling. I'm sleeping in an almost-sitting position. I've also placed an egg crate mattress underneath a plastic sheet to add comfort for my liposuction.

*Dr. Anson:* Mary underwent facelift with platysma plication, buccal fat pad excision and liposuction of the abdomen, hips, outer and inner thighs. The liposuction was performed first using the tumescent technique, which results in less bruising and blood loss. Liposuction of these areas resulted in 4.3 liters of fat removal. We limited the amount of liposuction because of the multiple procedures performed today.

Next, the buccal fat pad excision was done. This involves making a small incision in the mouth and removal of the fat pad just underneath the cheekbone. Reduction of this fat pad yields a less full, more hollowed appearance of the cheek. This is not a procedure for everyone.

In Mary's case the edges of her platysma muscle were widely separated in the neck just below the chin. The edges were, therefore, realigned in the midline and liposuction of the neck performed. Next, the facelift was performed, tightening the deeper SMAS (submuscular aponeurotic system) layer in addition to the skin.

Mary had general anesthesia for her



surgery. I recommended general anesthesia in this case because of the combined procedures and length of surgery. Actual surgery time was approximately six hours.

#### DAY 2:

*Mary:* I arrive at Dr. Anson's office on the second day. I'm driven by my friend, but I walk under my own power. I'm wearing a girdle-type garment, and I'm neither stiff nor sore. Dr. Anson removes the headress and drain tubes. The removal of the drains smarts. I have no bruising whatsoever on my face, and the swelling is minimal if any. She then places a facial sling-type garment that goes under my chin and up around my head. My liposuction has little visible bruising.

*Dr. Anson:* The dressings and drains are removed today. Mary has some bruising and swelling in the neck and liposuction sites, but these are minimal. I warn her today that the bruising and swelling may get a little worse in the next day or so. The amount of swelling and bruising is highly variable; some people have a lot, some little. Mary has less than expected in the face and a fairly typical amount in the body.

I generally warn my patients to expect bruising of the face for about two weeks after facelift; whatever is left can generally be covered with makeup at that point. Swelling takes longer to resolve after a facelift but is generally not apparent to others after three to four weeks. The time scale for recovery after body liposuction is similar; however, swelling will take much longer to fully resolve.

Most of the swelling is gone at one month, but it can take two to six months to fully resolve depending on the site (knees are notorious for prolonged swelling).

#### DAY 7:

*Mary:* I drive myself to Dr. Anson's office. She removes some sutures. I'm able to wear full makeup today, but I do avoid the incision areas. I'm still



*Before: Mary describes her chin as disappearing and points out what she calls her "turkey neck."*



*Before: Mary also wants liposuction to be performed on her hips and inner and outer thighs.*



*Day 1: The operation.*



*Day 1: Mary's liposuction resulted in 4.3 liters of fat removal.*

wearing the chin guard/compression head band around my face and chin. The sides of my neck feel tight and slightly hard. Underneath my chin is also slightly hard and tight. There is some numbness around my face and chin. The areas where I was liposuctioned are slightly numb to the touch and sore. I now have some bruising on the backs of my legs, but I'm able to move about very well. In fact, I'm back at work today.

*Dr. Anson:* She is doing very well. There is a small amount of swelling and there is a little more bruising in the neck. I remove the sutures in front of the ears and below the chin. I remind her to wear her compression band. I generally don't recommend makeup until about two weeks after surgery. The liposuction sites are more bruised and swelling is apparent. Despite the swelling, I can already see a marked change in contour. The sutures at the liposuction sites are removed today. Mary insists that she is feeling well, but I scold her for her early return to work and insist that she lighten her schedule.

#### DAY 14:

*Mary:* It's two weeks since my surgery and I'm in full makeup and wearing high heels for a short time. I find that too much standing has made my feet swell, and bending forward, talking or smiling too much gives me a slight headache. I have not bruised or swelled in my face at all. I was really concerned with the method that the incision would be done in the ear. I've seen ears that don't look normal from the incision. So just in case, because I wear my hair very short, I bought a wig after the surgery to hide the incisions, but I find that I don't need it. The incisions in my ears are virtually non detectable. My ears look perfectly normal, and my short hair covers the incisions behind my ears.

*Dr. Anson:* I am very pleased with Mary's progress. The bruising is essentially gone, and swelling is minimal. Not everyone recovers quite



## Sampling of Consultation Questions and Answers Between Mary and Dr. Anson

### Where will the facelift incisions be?

Incision for the facelift starts out in the scalp line above the ear, comes down in front of the ear, hugs the back of the tragus, which is the little cartilage at the ear, down in front of the ear again, behind the ear and into the scalp line. It's important that you know exactly where those incisions are because if your hair is short, you may want to change your hair style a little bit. The scars are permanent, but the scar in front of the ear is very fine. All scars start out being pink but fade with time. Moisturizing and avoiding sun exposure will give the best possible scar.

### What type of anesthesia will I need?

Surgery may be performed under general anesthesia or under local anesthesia with sedation (twilight). An anesthesiologist provides general anesthesia, which means that the patient is completely asleep. Some procedures can be done under local anesthesia, whereby a numbing medication is injected into the surgical site and discomfort is minimized with intravenous sedatives. Some procedures require general anesthesia and others can be done with either technique depending on the surgeon and patient.

### What about my recovery?

The pain will be bad but not hideous; medication will be given for it. You will need someone to take care of you the first 24 hours. You'll have a soft diet and a lot of fluids. Sleep with your head elevated to help keep the swelling down. You will be bruised and swollen for a good two weeks after surgery. Seventy percent of the swelling will be gone in three weeks. You will wear a sweatband around your head and under your neck for a week after surgery. All sutures will be out in 10 days. For body liposuction,

you will wear a compression garment for two weeks around the clock, then for several weeks during the day when you are active. You will need two weeks off from work, three weeks if you can handle the extra time. If you were having body liposuction alone, you would only need four days or so, depending on the kind of work you do.

### What about surgery complications?

Any surgery has potential complications. Anytime we cut skin, there are risks. It is my responsibility to discuss the possible risks, but please keep in mind that these risks are very low and these are very common procedures.

**Bleeding:** The most common complication with facelift is bleeding. Occasionally we will have someone with enough bleeding under the skin that we have to go back to surgery to drain that out, but it will generally happen within the first 24 hours, and it is very uncommon. We caution everyone not to take any Motrin, aspirin or anything like that for three weeks before surgery. The only safe thing to take is Tylenol. This is very important.

**Scarring:** One never knows how someone is going to scar. An infection can make a scar worse. If the scar is bad, chances are we can make it better over time, but it takes a year for a scar to fully mature. A patient must stay out of the sun and wear sun block for the first six months and, in fact, forever.

**Numbness:** Everyone has numbness after surgery, but most feeling will come back. The risk of permanent numbness will most likely be the ear. But again, it's unlikely. It is common along the scar line.

**Necrosis (loss of skin):** This is one of the more serious complications. If circulation is poor for whatever reason, it is more likely to present itself behind the ear but can happen in front of the ear. But 99 percent of the time it's with a smoker. It doesn't mean a smoker can't have this surgery, but I try very hard to get my patients to stop smoking, at least around the period of the surgery, although they still carry a higher risk even if they quit smoking.

**Injury to the nerves:** This damage is to the nerves that supply the muscles that animate our face and make facial expressions: smiling, raising an eyebrow. It's exceedingly rare. The whole operation is designed around avoiding these nerves.

### I've heard about traditional and Tumescence liposuction techniques. What is the difference?

Tumescence liposuction is a technique whereby a dilute solution of anesthetic and vasoconstricting agent is injected into the fatty tissue to be suctioned. This allows a larger amount of fat to be suctioned safely in one sitting because blood loss is minimal. There is less bruising and can sometimes be done without general anesthesia, depending on the amount and areas to be suctioned.

### What risks are there with Liposuction?

Liposuction removes fat but relies on the skin to shrink down. Therefore, if the skin is not elastic, it can result in contour and surface irregularities and looseness of the skin. Patients with a large amount of excess skin may not be good candidates for liposuction alone and may need abdominoplasty or thigh lift. Risks also include bleeding, numbness and asymmetry.



this quickly. I remind her to continue wearing her girdle.

#### DAY 21:

*Mary:* On this day my body is telling me to slow down. I have been maintaining a full schedule and I now have a terrible headache, my jaws hurt from too much talking, and my ears are sore from pressing the telephone against them. But the good news is I'm wearing slacks, and the new shape of my hips and legs is already evident.

*Dr. Anson:* Mary continues to recover very well. She still has a small amount of swelling in the area below the chin. This will take some time to fully resolve because of the surgery involving the muscles. The swelling of the abdomen, hips and thighs is resolving quickly.

#### DAYS 26 AND 27:

*Mary:* I have been itching in and around the incision areas of the facelift. I spoke with Dr. Anson regarding this, and she checked my incisions. She said that it was the sutures creating the slight annoyance. Evidently my system was not allowing the sutures to absorb. She removed the sutures and the itching subsided.

*Dr. Anson:* Some of the sutures placed behind the ear are dissolvable. In Mary's case, the sutures are dissolving very slowly, so I removed them since the skin is already healed.

#### DAYS 30 TO 64:

*Mary:* I awake in the mornings and quickly check the mirror to make certain that the fat has not returned, even though I see more and more improvement each day around my liposuctioned areas. My swelling is basically around my stomach, hips and outer thighs. I'm noticing that my clothes are looking baggy, especially my pants. My pear shape is now gone, but I do have approximately two more months to reshape. My biggest complaint would be that now when I itch around the liposuc-



*Day 2: Dr. Anson places on Mary a facial sling-type garment that goes under her chin and up around her head.*



*Day 7: Dr. Anson removes the sutures in front of Mary's ears and below her chin.*



*Day 14: The incisions in Mary's ears are virtually non-detectable.*



*After: Eat your heart out, Mr. de Leon.*



### Top 10 Aesthetic Procedures

- Eyelid Surgery
- Nose reshaping
- Liposuction
- Collagen injections
- Facelift
- Breast augmentation
- Laser resurfacing
- Chemical peel
- Tummy tuck
- Dermabrasion

### Plastic Surgeons' Fees

Prices may be higher or lower depending on the doctor. Price includes lab, surgery center, anesthesia; does not include prescriptions.

Abdominoplasty	\$5,500
Browlift	\$3,200
Breast augmentation	\$4,500
Breast reduction	\$6,500
Brachioplasty	\$3,000
Buccal fat pad exc.	\$1,600
Chin implant	\$2,300
Facelift	
female	\$6,000
male	\$7,000
Facelift and upper bleph	\$7,000
Facelift, upper/lower bleph	\$8,000
Facelift and browlift	\$8,200
Facelift/browlift/lower lids	\$9,200
Fat injection/face	\$1,100
Full face laser	\$3,000
Implant removal/capsulectomy	\$3,500
Liposuction (ranges)	\$2,500 - \$6,000
Mastopexy (ranges)	\$4,000 - \$6,500
Medial thigh lift	\$4,500
Mini abdominoplasty	\$4,000
Malar implant	\$2,600
Removal implants/capsulectomy	
reaugmentation with	
saline implants	\$6,200
Rhinoplasty	\$4,500
Upper or lower blepharoplasty	1,800
Upper and lower blepharoplasty	3,000



tioned areas, I scratch, but I don't feel that wonderful sensation of the nails. I am having massage done on the liposuctioned areas, and it seems to help the circulation and feeling.

**Dr. Anson:** The itching and irregular sensation is normal during the healing process. The vast majority of the swelling resolves in the first four weeks after liposuction. However, that last bit of swelling can take quite a while, and it may be several months before she sees her final result.

Mary is well on her way to recovery. Regarding her new look, Mary says, "My face keeps getting better definition each day. I've had so many compliments regarding my new look. I must say that I never experienced any problems or real concerns regarding my surgery. It was the best thing I could have ever done for myself."

Eat your heart out, Mr. de Leon. ❧

### Selecting a Plastic Surgeon

What to look for when interviewing a plastic surgeon. The doctor should:

- Answer all of your questions thoroughly in language you can understand.
- Ask about your motivations and expectations, discuss them with you, and solicit your reaction to her recommendations.
- Offer alternatives where appropriate, without pressuring you to consider unnecessary procedures.
- Welcome all questions about professional qualifications, experience, costs and payment policies.
- Make clear not only the risks of surgery but the possible variations in outcome. If the surgeon shows you photographs of other patients, or uses computer imaging to show you possible results, it should be clear that there is no guarantee that your results will match these.
- Make sure the final decision is yours.

## Non-invasive Cosmetic Procedures

by Jan Hogan

Improving one's physical appearance through cosmetic surgery is no longer the only way to achieve that *new look*. Grouped under the label "non-invasive cosmetic procedures," there are a number of techniques used by doctors to freshen, enhance or rejuvenate one's face and body.

- Erasing varicose veins (sclerotherapy) involves injecting a saline solution directly into the affected area. "The saline shrinks the vein," says dermatologist Dr. Jeffrey Arenswald of Las Vegas. "It kills the cells of the lining and scars them down."

Patients report minimal pain, and results take two to four weeks. Done in the doctor's office, the procedure takes approximately 15 minutes. Most patients need two visits. Cost: approximately \$200 per session.

- Facial lines can be plumped out with injections. Collagen is still an alternative, but more often, citing better success, doctors use the patient's own fat cells. "If fat is concentrated appropriately," says Dr. William Zamboni, a Las Vegas plastic surgeon, "the chance of a permanent take [will be] 50 percent."

While fat cells can be harvested from many areas, the tummy is the preferred target. (You're not getting liposuction thrown in, ladies, the physician needs only a minimal amount.) Performed in the office, a sedative and local anesthetic are used to ease discomfort. The process takes 30 to 60 minutes and one may need two or three injections to achieve permanent results. Cost: approximately \$400 per site.

- For forehead lines and eyes, Botox (a purified strain of botulism bacteria) is very effective. It instantly paralyzes the immediate muscles. Touch ups are administered every six months. "It makes you look like you're at rest all the time," says Dr. William Wyatt, a Las Vegas cosmetic surgeon. Price: \$400 per vial.

- For an all-over face rejuvenation, there's the glycolic acid peel. Nicknamed the *weekend glow* treatment, the acid removes dead cells and causes the dermis to produce fresh, new skin cells. "We specifically design [the solution] so patients don't come out of the office looking swollen or abnormal," says Dr. Arenswald. "They get results over a period of time

without having to take time off from work."

The procedure causes patients to look as though they've been out in the sun (hence the nickname), and they experience a brown flaking for up to seven days.

Post-op discomfort is comparable to a sunburn. The procedure takes only 10 to 15 minutes, but follow up and maintenance treatments are necessary. Cost: \$75 to \$180 each visit.

Laser resurfacing is a more intensive treatment — and so is its price: costs run from \$1,500 to \$2,200.

This procedure uses a carbon dioxide pulsating laser to deliver a short burst of energy to the skin. While the patient is under local (sometimes general) anesthesia, the computer controlled signal vaporizes the upper layers of the dermis in a *controlled burn*. Some skin types can handle having the entire face done in one session. "The best candidates," says Dr. Stephen Weiland, a Las Vegas plastic surgeon, "are those who desire improvement with the fine lines of aging and the results of long-term exposure to the sun. Those with acne problems benefit, as well."

The after effects are skin tightness, a *stop sign red* appearance and raw, weepy skin for several days. Once past these hurdles, however, patients see amazing results. "It's almost like getting a face-lift," says Dr. Wyatt.

- Endermologie is a technique used to rid a person of cellulite. Developed in France several years ago, the device used in the procedure is new to America. Patients undergo a series of 35-minute massage-like treatments.

Most people undergo the procedure twice a week for several months, then reduce it to a once-a-month maintenance schedule. Results are generally seen after six or eight sessions. The loss of inches and resulting body recontouring are not permanent if treatments are stopped. Cost: approximately \$100 a session.

Before undergoing any procedure, a person must give the physician a full and complete medical history, undergo a patch test for allergies and have realistic expectations. "We want people to be happy," says Dr. Arenswald, "but we can't make them look like they're 14." ❧