

# Survey finds demand for cosmetic surgery, driven by women under 45, surged after the pandemic

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Bob Basu, MD, a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, consults with Megan Gilbert, 35, who decided to undergo a breast augmentation and lift. Like Gilbert, many patients have opted for cosmetic procedures since the COVID-19 pandemic because they have more time at home to recover and they've saved money on things like travel and dining out. Credit: American Society of Plastic Surgeons

After the stress of the COVID-19 pandemic, a new national survey called the *Inaugural ASPS Insights and Trends Report: Cosmetic Surgery 2022* finds many Americans are now investing in themselves through cosmetic procedures, despite an uncertain economy. The American Society of Plastic Surgeons polled member surgeons nationwide and found more than three-quarters of cosmetic-focused plastic surgery practices are seeing more business than before the pandemic, with nearly 30 percent reporting their business has at least doubled.

"With COVID, we prepared for the worst. But when we were able to reopen our office, we were pleasantly surprised with the incredible surge of demand for our cosmetic services, both surgical and noninvasive," said Bob Basu, MD, a board-certified plastic surgeon in Houston and board vice president of finance of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons. "Now that the worst is hopefully behind us and people are traveling again and getting back to normal life, I initially thought that we would see some of that demand drop off, and that's not been the case. We're actually still seeing very high demand."

Basu says there are a variety of reasons behind the increased demand. For many patients, COVID shutdowns and the ability to work from home gave them the time they needed to heal, without disrupting their normal busy routine. Others say the money saved on things like travel and dining out during the [pandemic](#) allowed them to invest in themselves.

"COVID changed everything. No one was traveling, vacations got canceled. So I think a lot of families and patients had a lot more disposable income. And so, they found that this is the right time for them to do a cosmetic plastic surgery procedure," Basu said.

The survey also found that women between the ages of 31 and 45 were by far the most likely to request popular procedures such as breast augmentations, liposuction and tummy tucks. Basu says [millennials](#) are not only savvy about their options, but are also more open about their choice to seek [plastic surgery](#) than older generations.

"Millennials are very sophisticated in terms of getting the information they want. They share their experiences with other people through social media platforms or other methods. And so, these procedures are no longer taboo—They're actually relatable and accessible," Basu said. "Because of this open sharing, patients also come in well-versed about the procedures of interest. And so it really allows us to have a really productive discussion about their options."

Megan Gilbert, 35, was one of those millennials who did her research. When the pandemic halted her young family's busy lifestyle, they used the opportunity to focus on their health. But after a twenty-five-pound weight loss, Gilbert still had some insecurities when looking in the mirror.

"After breastfeeding two kids and losing weight, my breasts no longer looked how I wanted them to," she said. "And I thought, 'Why be unhappy with this one part of my body after working so hard to make all of these other improvements in my life?'"

A friend referred Gilbert to Dr. Basu, who worked with her to find the right size and type of breast implant. At the same time as her breast augmentation, he performed a breast lift to give her the look and shape she desired.

"I couldn't be happier with the results. Having that confidence back and feeling better about myself resonates in every part of my life, including with my family," Gilbert said. "I want my kids to be happy and secure in

their life and in who they are, and if they don't see that in me, it's hard for them to see it in themselves."

Although the surge in [cosmetic procedures](#) may be driven by women under 45, Basu says he's seeing more patients across every age group and gender who are interested in procedures to help them look and feel their best.

"We're seeing ourselves on a computer screen a lot more regularly and are much more aware of our appearance. And for a lot of people, that makes them recognize that they may want to look a little younger or to appear less tired, which has led to an increase in facial and neck procedures as well," Basu said. "I think there's something that's happened in terms of the cultural values on [aesthetics](#) and wellness in this country that we haven't seen before. And I think people are recognizing that it's okay to do something for themselves."

The survey found that over 40 percent of plastic [surgeons](#) are reporting longer wait times between consultation and surgery than before the pandemic, so experts encourage anyone considering a cosmetic procedure to plan ahead as much as possible. The first step is always to seek out a board-certified plastic surgeon who is a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons. This ensures that the surgeon is not only highly trained and experienced, but also employs the highest safety and ethical guidelines.

**More information:** [www.plasticsurgery.org/documents/tic-surgery-2022.pdf](http://www.plasticsurgery.org/documents/tic-surgery-2022.pdf)

Provided by American Society of Plastic Surgeons

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