

Thinner cheeks, lots of tweaks: America's plastic surgeons list trends

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From sculpting faces to show off cheek bones to removing excess skin

above the eyelid, interest in a nip and tuck is up, an online survey of plastic surgeons reveals.

The findings are based on responses from a selected group of members of the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (AAFPRS). In releasing the results, the academy said it wanted to showcase trends and correct disinformation about certain procedures.

"As people returned to the office and eased back into the routine of daily life without quarantine, interest for elective surgeries and non-invasive 'tweakments' remain high," said Dr. Theda Kontis, a cosmetic surgeon in Baltimore who heads the academy.

"In 2022, our members continued to see the impact of the "Zoom Boom," with 79% of respondents pointing to the "Zoom Effect' as a major contributing factor in patients' desire to seek treatment," Kontis said in an academy news release.

The next most significant motivation, at 60%, was an increase in disposable income.

"Many patients reported spending money saved during the pandemic on [cosmetic procedures](#)," Kontis said.

About 58% of the facial plastic surgeons reported an increase in bookings and treatments over the past year, according to the AAFPRS. More than three-quarters of them said patient demand had grown by more than 10%.

About 82% of procedures performed in 2022 were minimally invasive, including Botox, fillers and topicals, such as chemical peels. The other 18% were surgical procedures. The top three were facelifts, eyelid surgery ("blepharoplasty") and nose jobs, according to the report.

"Upper blepharoplasty removes the excess skin above the eyelid, reducing that hooded appearance that can occur naturally with age, while lower blepharoplasty targets the fat pads below the eye, restoring a smoother, more youthful look," Kontis said. "Both are relatively minor procedures that lend themselves to tremendous patient satisfaction."

Rhinoplasty, surgery to reshape the nose, was the most-requested procedure in patients under age 34.

In 16 of 18 procedures tracked, women outnumbered men. Predictably, hair transplantation was more popular with men. Otoplasty, which is surgery to make ears less prominent, had the highest gender equality, according to the survey.

Sharp, prominent cheekbones reminiscent of 1990s models are popular, though surgeons are a bit puzzled by a popular trend of removing buccal fat (the fat between your cheekbones and jaw bones). It creates a slimmer, sculpted face but is irreversible.

This trend is similar to what's referred to as "Ozempic face," the hollowed-out look that can happen to those using the diabetes weight-loss drug semaglutide.

Fillers and fat injections are a common request among middle-aged women, and surgeons urge people to consider the long-term effects of any surgery, including buccal fat removal, before proceeding.

"Buccal fat surgery is not reversible—so while you may love the look in your 20s and 30s, as you age, your face naturally loses fat, and therefore volume," Kontis said.

Rapid weight loss can accelerate the aging process, she warned.

"Like any massive weight-loss treatment, semaglutide treatments can cause fat pads to shrink, making facial volume depleted and the skin can appear lax and saggy," Kontis said. "Of course, we can treat these unwanted side effects with everything from fillers to facelifts, but the point is there's no such thing as a magic pill."

More patients under age 30 are now requesting cosmetic [surgery](#) or injectables, representing a consistently higher plateau over the five previous years, according to the survey.

About 78% of AAFPRS members said they expect to see a greater emphasis on earlier maintenance and aging prevention starting in the 20s and 30s. The survey showed increases in surgical activity in the 35- to 55-year age group.

Gen Z (those born between 1997 and 2012) is not having a big influence on numbers, despite talk of "Snapchat dysmorphia" and wanting to alter appearances to resemble social media filters, according to the survey.

About 79% of plastic surgeons said, however, that a desire to look better in selfies is a trend. Lip lifts were up 3% last year.

About 20% of patients refer to celebrities at their appointments, according to the AAFPRS.

"Finding the right, most qualified, physician to perform any procedure is priority number one," said Steve Jurich, CEO and executive vice president of AAFPRS. "Always select a surgeon specifically trained in procedures of the face, head, and neck and make sure the physician is qualified, experienced and board-certified in the procedure you want."

More information: The U.S. National Library of Medicine has more on [plastic and cosmetic surgery](#).

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