

Cosmetic procedure in your plans for '24? An expert offers advice

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More than a few folks are considering a cosmetic skin procedure to

enhance their looks heading into 2024.

Botox, fillers and lasers are common means to sculpt a person's appearance, but dermatologists recommend a comprehensive approach under the care of a qualified specialist.

"There is no one-size-fits-all or 'cookie cutter' approach to combat the signs of aging because aging looks different on everyone," said [Dr. Laura Fine](#), a board-certified [dermatologist](#) in Chicago. "On the flipside, there is no one cosmetic treatment to address all of these changes."

Here is what the most common procedures can do:

- **Botox (botulinum toxin)** can diminish frown lines and crow's feet around a person's eyes, and is also a treatment for excessive sweating, Fine said. Most people see results within three to seven days, and results can last about three to four months.
- **Fillers** can restore lost fullness to the face, lips and hands, and can be used to lessen scars and erase fine lines. They provide immediate results but tend to be temporary, requiring repeated treatments.
- **Lasers** can treat a variety of unsightly stretch marks, scars, hair and age spots, Fine said. However, keep in mind lasers can't fully remove stretch marks or scars, just make them less noticeable.

"The best cosmetic outcomes are often achieved with a comprehensive approach, starting with skincare at home, combined with other in-office treatments recommended by a board-certified dermatologist that is taking all of these factors into account when recommending a cosmetic [treatment](#) that is best for you," Fine said in an American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) news release.

Before choosing any of these approaches, the AAD recommends asking the following questions of a potential care provider:

- What are the doctor's credentials, and are they board-certified? Dermatologists are full-fledged medical doctors with extensive education, training and experience.
- How many of a particular cosmetic procedure has the provider performed? The doctor should perform the procedure regularly, and have before-and-after photos of previous patients ready for review.
- What results can I expect, and are there any risks? A dermatologist will lay out whether a particular procedure will deliver the results a person expects, based on the patient's age and health.

"While some cosmetic procedures may look easy to perform, understanding how to safely treat patients and deliver the best desired result requires an in-depth medical knowledge of the skin," Fine said.

"In the age of social media and [information overload](#), anyone can tout themselves as an expert," she added. "Going to a board-certified dermatologist for cosmetic treatments ensures that you will receive effective results from an expert with a deep understanding of the skin."

More information: The American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery has more about [cosmetic procedures](#).

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