
About.com Plastic Surgery

Bad Plastic Surgery: What to Do if It Happens to You

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Bad plastic surgery fascinates us. We look on in wonder as Hollywood's royalty evolve into impossibly smooth, ridiculously tight wax figures of themselves, and we can't stop talking about it. From gossip columns to hour-long TV specials, we can't stop hearing about it. There are entire website devoted to the worst of the worst when it comes to celebrity plastic surgery---featuring countless photos of stars like Tara Reid, Joan Rivers, Michael Jackson, and even those who deny the plastic surgery rumors, like Jessica Simpson (who has admitted only to having lip augmentation).

What To Do If You Think You've Been a Victim

According to board-certified Manhattan plastic surgeon, Matthew Schulman, MD, the first thing you should do if you think you've been a victim of bad plastic surgery is to call your surgeon and make an appointment to see him or her. Understand that even the best surgeons have complications. It is possible that what you're seeing or experiencing is just a normal part of your healing process. If it is something more serious, your surgeon may offer to do a corrective surgery at no charge to you. Either way, in most cases you should give him or her a chance to rectify the situation before taking further action.

If speaking with your surgeon has proved unhelpful and you still feel there is a problem, seek a second opinion. Make sure you seek the advice of a qualified (and board-certified) plastic surgeon, perhaps even one who specializes in exactly the kind of surgery you have had. Another option is a surgeon who specializes in corrective surgery. Keep in mind that corrective surgery is often not just cosmetic, but also reconstructive by nature. If you are considering undergoing a second (or third, or fourth surgery) to correct the problem, do consider a surgeon with extensive training and experience in reconstructive surgery. Just be aware that in order to minimize risk, you may need to wait at least one year before having another surgery on the same area.

Finally, if you truly feel you have been wronged in some way by your surgeon, be sure to document your complaint with written notes, including dates, times, symptoms and problems, as well as photos, if possible. When you have your information together, you can file a complaint with the state medical board and/or with the Office of Professional Medical Conduct. Then of course, if you feel you are entitled to compensation of some sort for your botched procedure, you may decide to contact an attorney who specializes in medical cases.

Is It Really That Bad? Or Is It All In Your Head?

One subject we should touch on here has more to do with psychology than with surgical technique. Unfortunately in the world of plastic surgery, as in life, there are some people who will just never be happy. For some, it is a simple case of low self-esteem or trying to live up to impossible standards of perfection. For others, both before and after surgery, they imagine that there is something terribly wrong with their appearance. They seek out surgeon after surgeon, hoping each one will fix the "horrible mistakes" made by the last. These people do not see what everyone else sees. There is a name for this psychological disorder, and it is [body dysmorphic disorder](#)¹.

If you have had plastic surgery and are truly unhappy with the result, it may be that you have been the victim of a botched procedure. However, it may just be that you went in with [unrealistic expectations](#)² of the outcome, or that you are seeing a distorted image of what you really look like to the world. If you are unhappy with what you see in the mirror, it might just be worth asking yourself if the flaws you're obsessing over could possibly be all in your head.

Signs You Should See a Doctor Right Away

In some cases, plastic surgery gone wrong is much more serious than ending up looking bad. Many surgical complications can be life threatening, and require immediate medical attention.

- **Signs of Infection:** redness or drainage around the incision site, pain that is disproportionate to the procedure, fever or chills, nausea or vomiting
- **Signs of a Blood Clot:** calf tenderness or cramping, disproportionate swelling (especially if one side of the body/one leg is more swollen than the other)
- **Other Signs You Should Seek Medical Attention:** shortness of breath, chest pain, unusual heartbeats, wound separation, excessive bleeding

Share Your Story

Have you (or has someone you know) had a bad experience with plastic surgery? [Share your story.](#)³

Sources:

Interview with [Andrew Jacono, MD](#)⁴, New York, NY; conducted on 8/5/08

Interview with [Matthew Schulman, MD](#)⁵, New York, NY; conducted on 7/31/08

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