

New Horizons in Plastic Surgery

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Combined Cosmetic and Reconstructive Procedures—What You Need to Know

Medically indicated procedures are submitted for insurance approval if your physician is contracted with your insurance company to provide service. Questions often arise regarding what is considered medically indicated and what is considered cosmetic. The definition of cosmetic surgery is to try to enhance ones appearance with surgery. The definition of reconstructive surgery is to try to restore one to normal function with surgery. There are specific clinical examples of conditions that patients often find difficult to differentiate.

A panniculectomy means to remove the pannus or roll on the abdomen. This can be a medically indicated procedure because it addresses redundant skin on the abdominal wall that may produce a rash or limit activity. Panniculectomy is different than a formal tummy tuck because a tummy tuck requires a great deal more skin

undermining, abdominal wall tightening, and flank liposuction. If a panniculectomy is combined with a tummy tuck, there is a separate charge for the cosmetic component of the procedure.

Often patients seeking consultation for a rhinoplasty have associated deviated septum or airway obstruction. The septal surgery or the airway improvement would be a medically indicated part of the procedure, but an enhancement in the appearance of your nose would require a separate cosmetic fee.

Breast reduction is often a covered operation. Your insurance company will require documentation of height and weight as well as evidence of functional limitations and diet. A letter from your primary care physician is often helpful in the approval process. Insurance companies do not pay for breast lifts (mastopexy) when only a small amount

of tissue is removed.

If your upper eyelids are excessively redundant, they may obstruct your vision. In these cases an upper eyelid blepharoplasty may be medically indicated and covered by insurance. Often a formal visual field exam is required from an eye doctor to confirm the diagnosis. Lower eyelid surgery is frequently performed in combination with the upper eyelid, but this a cosmetic procedure not covered by insurance.

Patients can save a great deal on the cost and recovery when cosmetic and reconstructive procedures are combined and communication with your surgeon and your insurance company is the key to success.

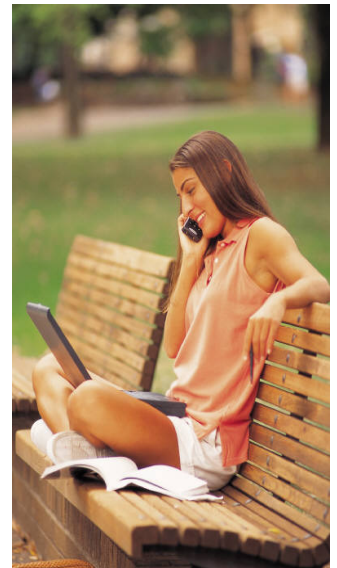
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you've met with us. Our website was developed with our patient's in mind. We encourage you to explore the website, look through our "before and after" gallery, sign up for our newsletter or e-mail us a question or comment. This is just one more

way we try to keep our patients informed with the newest products and trends in plastic surgery. Visit our site today!

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Dr. Lowe and his staff are committed to providing you with up to date information and education about cosmetic surgery. Visit our website: www.drjlowe.com for news, pre and post operative instructions or just to ask us a question. Our number one priority is you!



The cold winter months are a great time to rejuvenate your skin. Ask us about products and procedures to get your skin in tip-top shape for Spring!