

# WebSource

## Video Short

### More Teens Getting Plastic Surgery

By CWK Network Producer

More teenagers are opting to change their appearance. That's according to the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery. In fact, in the past decade, the number of teens opting for a smaller nose, larger breasts and a skinnier waist has more than tripled. What do you do if your teen wants to go under the knife?

*"I could not stand to look in the mirror one more day looking at me the way I was. I just couldn't do it."*

-Ashleigh Giglio, 18 years old

The body changes ... the teasing. Our insecurity with our own bodies begins in puberty and can continue throughout life. How should parents respond when teenagers say they hate the way they look?

Ashleigh, 18, recently had plastic surgery on her nose to correct a bump caused by a childhood injury. "After she had it done she's been a different person," says her mom, Ridley Giglio. "She's happy. She's happy all the time."

Like Ashleigh, many kids grow up disappointed with the way they look.

In 2007, 11.7 million Americans had cosmetic surgery. More than 200,000 were just teens.

But is cosmetic surgery a good option for *younger* teenagers? Experts say probably not, unless the anxiety is extreme. "The time that parents really need start getting concerned is when these concerns that a teenager has actually gets in the way of them doing things," says child psychiatrist Shannon Croft. "They don't want to go to school because somebody is going to notice how they look. They start avoiding social situations, party's friends they normally would go to," he says.

Most of the time, concerns about appearance are normal, and dissipate over time, Croft says. "Usually as people get older they get more comfortable with how they look and their body, and a lot of these concerns will diminish on their own."

Ashleigh's younger sister Angela wants cosmetic surgery, too. But her mother has decided that at age 14 she is too young. "Angela, that would be something when she's older, evaluate it then. I just think right now, she's got the family nose. And there's nothing wrong with that," Ridley Giglio says.

### 'My Nose is Too Big'

By CWK Network, Inc

For most children, adolescence is a time of introspection and self-evaluation. Virtually every facet of their lives is put under a microscope as they try to determine where and how they "fit in" with their family, their peers, and the world at large. Typically, part of this self-evaluation process is focused upon physical appearance. Unfortunately for some teens, the nature of their evaluation tends to be hypercritical, and not very well based in reality.

The influence of social media has been known to create a heavy influence on teenagers, and plays a large role in the many believing a minor flaw is large enough to warrant needing to go under the knife. Regardless of whether the perceived flaws are real or imagined, the emotional upset and pain experienced by these teens is very real and very painful to them.

The American Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons most commonly perform operations on acne scars, breasts, ears, and noses of teenagers, specifically a population of 236,000 out of the possible "15.1 million cosmetic surgeries performed each year." Though there are variations in the amounts of time needed for the operations to heal and the patient to get back to their routine, summer breaks provide the perfect window for these surgeries to take place. With more celebrities coming forward about past operations, and the chance at avoiding or lessening bullying at school, more teenagers may join this trend at whatever costs.

## What Parents Should Know

How can parents help their teens deal with body image misperceptions? Dr. Rex Forehand, a psychologist specializing in child and adolescent issues, suggests that parents consider the following ideas in helping their children deal with their negative feelings.

- Listen and respond when your child talks about negative perceptions of her or himself.
- Don't just "wave it off". The negative perception may not be true, but it is important to your child.
- Talk and respond with empathy but don't dwell on the negative perception (don't bring it up).
- If the negative perception is false, reassure your child. If there is some truth to the negative perception (your child does have ears that stick out, acne, etc.), "counter argue" by presenting the positives of your child.
- Work on building your child's self-esteem by:
  - limiting negative feedback to your child;
  - praising his efforts and positive behavior;
  - spending quality time with your child;
  - accepting your child by communicating love and affection;
  - teaching your child to use positive self-talk. That is, encourage your child to say positive things about him or herself whenever they do something positive. Parents can do this through modeling by complimenting themselves whenever they do something positive, and by complimenting their child by using phrases such as "you should be so proud of yourself for..."

## Resources

- [American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery](#)
- [Grady Healthcare Systems](#)
- [International Business Times](#)
- [American Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons](#)

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