

Americans are spending more than ever on plastic surgery

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Plastic surgery is becoming more and more mainstream, but should be considered seriously. USA TODAY



(Photo: Romariolen, Getty Images/iStockphoto)

Americans underwent hundreds of thousands of breast implant, liposuction and nose surgeries last year, spending billions to make 2016 the most plastic year ever.

An American Society of Plastic Surgeons report found Americans spent more than \$16 billion on cosmetic plastic surgeries and minimally invasive procedures in 2016, the most the U.S. has ever spent on such operations.

It's evidence that plastic surgery, once reserved for the rich and famous, is now more mainstream, safer and accessible, said New York City plastic surgeon Dr. Alan Matarasso, an ASPS spokesman.

Breast augmentation surgeries, typically breast implants, far outpaced other surgeries with nearly 300,000 operations nationwide. Breast augmentations and the 223,018 nose reshaping surgeries both netted doctors more than a billion dollars in 2016. Liposuction also remains popular, with 235,237 surgeries across the U.S. costing about \$750 million.

The average cost of a breast implant surgery went down about 3%, the study said, while liposuction and nose reshaping increased by about 6%.

By far the most popular minimally-invasive procedures of 2016 were wrinkle treatment injections, such as Botox. Americans underwent about 7 million procedures at a national average cost of \$385.

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Matarasso credits the uptick in plastic procedures to a bevy of industry, societal and economic factors.

There was a time people would be "outed" for getting plastic surgery. Now many have embraced the procedures, often posting pictures of their recoveries on social media.

Matarasso posited that the surge is also driven partly by human nature, which he said inspires self-improvement. An improved look, he said, can have an impact on someone seeking a job in a competitive work environment. In a rebounding economy, he said, people have the income to spend on the procedures. Although, he noted, down economy's can drive surgeries as people try to get a leg up on competitors in the working world.

The growth could be attributed, Matarasso said, to the greater public awareness about the success of the surgeries and procedures, brought on by better education and advances in technology. Fifteen years ago, he said, a nose procedure could put someone in the hospital for two to three days. Today, it takes just a few hours. Many of the non-invasive surgeries, he added, didn't exist even a decade ago.

Matarasso predicted that the industry will continue to grow. He stressed people should seek legitimate doctors to perform their surgeries by ensuring they are a board certified plastic surgeon and a member of ASPS.

"Before you undergo any procedure, make sure you're putting yourself in the hands of only the most qualified and highly trained plastic surgeons," said ASPS President Debra Johnson. "The cost of any procedure is not nearly as important as doing your homework and selecting a surgeon whose primary focus is your safety."

Popular cosmetic surgical procedures of 2016:

- Breast augmentation: 290,467 procedures
- Liposuction: 235,237 procedures
- Nose reshaping: 223,018 procedures
- Tummy tuck: 127,633 procedures
- Buttock augmentation: 18,489 procedures

Popular minimally invasive procedures:

- Wrinkle treatment injections: 7 million procedures
- Hyaluronic acid fillers: 2 million procedures
- Chemical peel: 1.3 million procedures
- Microdermabrasion: 775,014 procedures
- Laser treatments: 656,781 procedures