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Mokhtar Asaadi, M.D.

Utilizing Innovative Techniques to
Achieve Breathtaking Results
in Cosmetic Plastic Surgery

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Utilizing Innovative Techniques to Achieve Breathtaking Results in Cosmetic Plastic Surgery

By Iris Goldberg

The numbers of patients who undergo elective surgical procedures has increased dramatically. Plastic surgery, in particular, which offers those who are unhappy with almost any aspect of their physical appearance a host of procedures that can restore one's youthful look or, perhaps, enable an individual to actually be more attractive than he or she was before, is becoming more commonplace. Once reserved for those of extreme wealth and/or fame, cosmetic surgery is now performed on millions of Americans each year. In fact, many people undergo more than one procedure at a time, correcting multiple problem areas during one surgical experience. Unlike the process of choosing a surgeon when an unexpected illness or injury occurs and a referral is often made by another physician, patients contemplating appearance-altering surgery have the luxury of time to extensively research on their own and compare the skills, costs and post-procedural results of many surgeons. It is not uncommon to find advertisements for plastic surgery practices in consumer publications and during television and radio programs as well. Also, many prospective surgical candidates make their choice based on the experience and appearance of a friend or relative. While this is a plus for many patients, it must be remembered that cosmetic surgery, after all, is still surgery, with its inherent risks, complications and at times, less than optimal outcomes. It is crucial, therefore, when considering an elective procedure to choose a surgeon based upon his or her experience, skill and past record of performance.

This month we offer our physician readership a profile of Mokhtar Asaadi, M.D., F.A.C.S., who, with 27 years of experience, performs

the entire gamut of cosmetic surgical procedures for the face and body with an unwavering determination to provide his patients with the beautiful and natural results they desire by integrating the most innovative techniques in the field of plastic surgery. Dr. Asaadi, who has received significant recognition for the quality of his work, accomplishes this while placing a premium on his patients' safety and well being throughout the entire process. With offices in West Orange, New Jersey and Manhattan, Dr. Asaadi is affiliated in New Jersey with Saint Barnabas Medical Center in Livingston and Morristown Memorial Hospital and with Lenox Hill Hospital in New York.

When speaking with Dr. Asaadi, one can't help but appreciate the passion and perfectionism with which he approaches his work. During his extensive career he has honed his expertise by continually incorporating new technology, when appropriate and by not being afraid to learn from his own mistakes in order to improve upon his surgical outcomes. Whether performing Facial Rejuvenation, Breast Enhancement or Body Contouring, he devotes a great deal of time to his procedures in an effort to achieve the maximum result in each case. (For a complete list of cosmetic procedures offered by Dr. Asaadi, please refer to the sidebar included with this article.) Also, Dr. Asaadi performs all procedures in a hospital setting in order to ensure safety and requires an overnight stay for those patients who, because of the extent of their surgery, would be more comfortable and more carefully monitored under hospital supervision. He is eager to discuss his philosophy. "If you are going to do anything at all, you have to take your time, you

Upon entering, patients can appreciate the attention to detail with which the office has been decorated. In Dr. Asaadi's procedures as well, the small details are most important.



have to be critical of your own work and you have to do it in a safe place,” Dr. Asaadi says with conviction.

One of the procedures which Dr. Asaadi has spent a great deal of time perfecting over the years is eyelid surgery or **blepharoplasty**. This procedure removes excess fat, muscle and skin from both the upper and lower eyelids. Blepharoplasty can correct drooping upper lids and puffy bags below the eyes, which can make patients look older and more tired than they might feel. The results can be a refreshed appearance with a younger, firmer eye area. Dr. Asaadi regards the eyes as a monitor that reveals much about a person and therefore considers this to be an important area to address with cosmetic surgery. “When you look at a person, the first thing you notice that shows age or whether a person is happy or sad or even has had a good night’s sleep, is the eyes,” explains Dr. Asaadi.

As the lids age, the skin wrinkles, becoming redundant and less opaque. Redundant skin on the upper eyelids can sometimes actually hang beyond the eyelashes, obscuring vision. Although upper eyelid surgery is rather standard and does not vary a great deal in procedural technique from surgeon to surgeon, Dr. Asaadi discusses some of the important aspects of his upper eyelid procedures. He points out that the skin of the upper eyelid is different from that just below the eyebrow. After making his markings in the crease of the upper lid, Dr. Asaadi is careful to remove excess skin from the lid only. Then, he removes a little of the muscle in the center of the incision of the upper lid to create a better crease. Next, Dr. Asaadi opens the septum and takes fat only from the medial pocket of the upper eyelid. He does not remove fat elsewhere to avoid creating a “hollow” look that can occur if fat is removed from the other pockets.

While it may be true that upper blepharoplasty is somewhat straight forward, Dr. Asaadi is anxious to emphasize the complexity of lower eyelid surgery and the importance of properly addressing

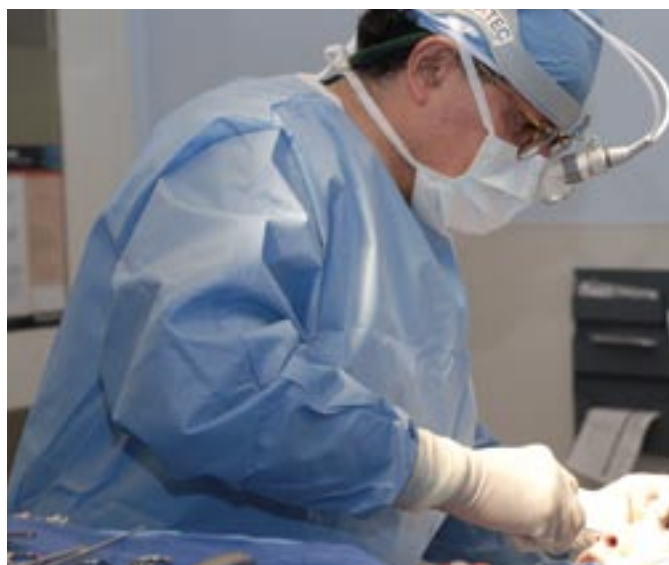


PHOTO BY MICHAEL GOLDBERG

To remove a bump on the nose, Dr. Asaadi separates the tissue from the cartilage and bone to allow access with the chisel.

the issues of each individual patient. He explains that several different surgical techniques can be incorporated depending upon the needs and desired outcomes of the patient. Dr. Asaadi believes that when it comes to eyelid surgery, a conservative approach is best whenever possible. If a patient has good skin tone, which is often the case in some younger patients, Dr. Asaadi may only need to remove the fat. When there are more complex issues involved, however, he utilizes a variety of innovative surgical techniques to reshape the anatomy by addressing muscles, tendons and skin. Whatever the procedure requires, Dr. Asaadi explains that the goal is to achieve a youthful, balanced and natural look. “It’s not how much you take out but how much you can leave behind and how much you can restore,” he says.

For the patient with good tone and elasticity of the skin who merely has fatty lower eyelids, Dr. Asaadi can perform a procedure that requires no external incision and can be accomplished from inside the lower lid. The **transconjunctival eyelid blepharoplasty** represents a big advancement in the field of cosmetic eyelid surgery. This technology allows Dr. Asaadi to gently pull the lower lid away from the eyeball using a blunt retractor, while the eyeball is protected with a plastic plate. An electrocautery is used to sweep across the conjunctiva along most of its length near its junction with the eyeball. The eyelid fat presents itself almost immediately. The three fat pockets are eased out of their capsules and into the surgical field where the fat can then be excised and cauterized. Dr. Asaadi can pause at any time to assess the procedure in progress from the front, allowing for excellent precision. In these patients who have minimal or no excessive skin, the skin and muscle layers previously extended out over the bulges of fat simply return to a more normal position with little or no evidence of redundancy or shrinking. The advantages to this procedure are numerous, including minimal trauma and a faster recovery.

Many patients, however, have more complex problems than just fat deposits in the lower eyelids. Aging causes lines and bulges in

Cosmetic Procedures

Facial Rejuvenation

- Face & Neck Lift
- Forehead Lift
- Eyelid Surgery
- Facial Implants
- Ear Reshaping
- Nasal Surgery

Breast Enhancement

- Breast Enlargement
- Breast Lift
- Breast Reduction
- Breast Reconstruction
- Male Breast Reduction

Body Contouring

- Tummy Tuck
- Liposuction
- Vaser Liposelection
- Thigh Lift
- Arm Lift

Cosmetic Treatments

- Mesoplasty
- Botox Cosmetic
- Cosmetic Fillers
 - Juvederm
 - Collagen Injections
 - Fat Transfer Injection
 - Artefill
 - Restylane
 - Perlane
 - Sculptra
 - Radiesse
- Laser Resurfacing
- Chemical Peels
- Skin Care
- Skin Care Products
- Permanent Make-Up

This photo taken prior to blepharoplasty, as seen in *NEWBEAUTY* magazine's Spring/Summer March 2008 issue.



After undergoing upper and lower blepharoplasty with Dr. Asadi, the dramatic improvement in the patient's appearance is obvious. She looks younger, energized and certainly more attractive. As seen in *NEWBEAUTY* magazine's Spring/Summer March 2008 issue.



Aligning the before and after blepharoplasty photos demonstrates the spectacular results Dr. Asaadi is able to achieve. As seen in *NEWBEAUTY* magazine's Spring/Summer March 2008 issue.



the lid cheek junction, where the lower lid meets the cheek. The junction drops and becomes more convex. A great number of individuals have excess puffy skin on the cheekbone just beneath the lower eyelids. These puffy pockets are called *FESTOONS* and are usually caused by a problem with the orbicularis muscle. Over time, predisposed individuals develop attenuation of the orbicularis oculi muscle and laxity of the attachments between the orbicularis and the deep fascia. The orbicularis progressively sags until folds of muscle are suspended across the lid, emulating gathered bunting. Often, protruding intraorbital fat and septum accompany festoons. Dr. Asaadi directs his corrective surgical steps to the tightening of the slack muscle and skin, while being careful to leave the muscle over the tarsus which supports the lower eyelid in tact.

Dr. Asaadi makes a point of distinguishing between the approach he uses, which is called *canthopexy* and the more invasive *canthoplasty*. Canthoplasty involves cutting through the orbicularis muscle, detaching the lateral canthal tendon from the bone at the side of the eye socket. The internal structure of the lower lid is then pulled over and attached to the spot on the eye socket where the tendon had been attached. Instead, during canthopexy, Dr. Asaadi uses sutures to tighten the back part of the lower eyelid, stabilizing the tendon and reinforcing the muscle without cutting or detaching anything. In his opinion this more conservative method is preferable because it allows him flexibility to make adjustments. He points out that in canthoplasty, once the muscle is cut through, there is little that can be done to correct if too much pulling of the lower lid creates an unnatural “cat’s eye” appearance. By permanently suturing the muscle to the strong temporal fascia, Dr. Asaadi can then tighten the front part of the lower lid without pull to the lower lid margin, accomplishing a natural-looking correction.

Using a technique called *SEPTAL RESET* Dr. Asaadi aggressively removes the fat from the lateral pocket in the corner of the lower lid to eradicate puffiness and redistributes the fat from the medial and central pockets in order to pad the lower eyelid. Although there is much controversy about how much fat to remove and where to remove it, Dr. Asaadi believes this method is the most efficient way to remove all remnants of puffiness and restore a youthful, natural appearance. One need only to look at pictures of Dr. Asaadi’s patients before and after their eyelid surgery to be assured that the results he is able to achieve with these techniques, which he has perfected over time, are no less than spectacular.

Dr. Asaadi firmly believes that it is the attention to subtle nuances and personalized details that make the difference in achieving the best possible outcome for each individual patient. As in blepharoplasty Dr. Asaadi applies this philosophy to the other cosmetic procedures he performs. For example, Dr. Asaadi performs **abdominoplasty**, better known as a “tummy tuck” on numerous patients to correct diastasis, a condition where the abdominal wall muscles have separated. The most common reason for this is multiple pregnancies. During pregnancy the abdominal muscles stretch open. Although exercise can help somewhat to strengthen

muscles, exercise cannot replace surgery in terms of repairing damage and loose skin.

In order to obtain an optimum result from abdominoplasty, instead of just tightening the muscle, Dr. Asaadi makes an extensive repair to the abdominal muscle, which takes considerable time and requires an overnight hospital stay. Unfortunately, Dr. Asaadi sees patients who have had lesser, outpatient procedures with other surgeons and come to him for additional surgery to effectively and permanently correct the problem. In conjunction with the abdominoplasty Dr. Asaadi uses a technique called puboplasty to remove excess fat and skin in the pubic region, giving the entire midsection a taut, smooth appearance. “It’s the details that ultimately make a procedure effective in its ability to provide long-lasting, aesthetic results where form follows function,” Dr. Asaadi recently shared during an interview in *NEWBEAUTY* magazine.

For some women who undergo abdominoplasty there are other problem areas detracting from a slim, youthful, natural appearance. Dr. Asaadi can further contour and refine their bodies with **liposuction** and sometimes a **breast enhancement** as well. These multiple procedures can take up to nine hours. Dr. Asaadi emphasizes that with the larger and more complex procedures, attention to the small details remains his priority.

Dr. Asaadi consults with many women who are dissatisfied with the size and appearance of their breasts. Although some wish for their breasts to be smaller and others want to regain the firmness and

During breast augmentation surgery, Dr. Asaadi is shown adding a measured amount of saline to the implant to achieve the desired size.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL GOLDBERG

more naturally rounded shape of their youth, a considerable number of women want their breasts to be larger. **Breast augmentation** enlarges a woman's breasts through the surgical placement of breast implants made of medical grade, biocompatible shells filled with sterile saline solution. Dr. Asaadi is exceptionally proud of the fact that his patients who undergo breast augmentation do not experience any of the unpleasant or unattractive complications that have been associated with this procedure.

For example, after some breast augmentation surgery, excessive scar tissue may form around the breast implant. This condition, called *CAPSULAR CONTRACTURE*, causes the implant to harden and in some patients, scar tissue can become so severe that it can squeeze the implant and cause a visible deformity as well as pain. The breasts feel extremely hard to the touch and are also quite unnatural looking. "This has nothing to do with the implants themselves," asserts Dr. Asaadi. "It's how you do things. In my practice I do not have capsule problems. I don't have a single case of implant leakage either," he shares.

It is obvious to anyone who listens to Dr. Asaadi discuss how he performs this procedure as well as all of the others, that he is a true perfectionist. "There are so many small things that you have to do to get these things right," he says emphatically.

In addition to the great effort Dr. Asaadi has made over the years to perfect the outcomes of his procedures from an aesthetic perspective, he has continued to put the safety of his patients first and credits facilities like Saint Barnabas Medical Center, where he performs a great number of his procedures, for assisting him to keep his stellar record in tact. Dr. Asaadi insists on performing all surgical procedures in a hospital setting so that there are personnel, equipment and medical supplies necessary in the unlikely event of an emergency.

One of the risks associated with any surgery is a problem with anesthesia. This can be especially dangerous when surgery is

After breast augmentation surgery is completed, the scarring is minimal. Shown here, Dr. Asaadi completes suturing the small incision. Dr. Asaadi's patients can look forward to an excellent recovery with no Capsular Contracture or implant leakage.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL GOLDBERG

performed in an office setting, where fatalities during cosmetic surgical procedures have been reported in the news on several occasions. Dr. Asaadi is particularly concerned about malignant hyperthermia, which is severe, potentially fatal increased body energy consumption after exposure to certain anesthetic drugs. Malignant hyperthermia occurs in persons who have a genetic susceptibility to this medical condition. Having a family history of death during general anesthesia or having a high body temperature during or after general anesthesia are the most likely indications that a person might be prone to malignant hyperthermia. Although there is genetic testing available that can detect the presence of this susceptibility, many people may be unaware they have it.

Some of the commonly used medications that should be avoided in people with malignant hyperthermia are succinylcholine, which is a muscle relaxant and all of the volatile (inhaled) anesthetic agents. Dr. Asaadi has participated extensively in the study of this condition and is quite careful to question patients about any past problems. If, however, in the extremely small probability that a reaction were to occur, Dr. Asaadi knows that being in a hospital setting would ensure that all of the correct steps would be taken to deal with the crisis. Dantrolene, which is a medication given intravenously to treat malignant hyperthermia would be readily on hand and administered immediately. Close monitoring of breathing, heart function and body temperature would be undertaken. Oxygen would be provided with an increased breathing rate using a mechanical ventilator to remove excess carbon dioxide from the individual's system and cooling blankets and ice packs could be used if the patient's temperature becomes markedly elevated. Medications to control blood pressure or treat abnormal heart rhythms could also be administered, if necessary.

Dr. Asaadi has been a Diplomate of the American Board of Plastic Surgery since 1983 and is a current member of many prestigious medical societies including The American Society of Plastic Surgeons, The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, the New Jersey Society of Plastic Surgery, the American College of Surgeons and the Lipolysis Society of North America. He completed his general surgery and plastic surgery residencies at Saint Barnabas Medical Center in Livingston. Dr. Asaadi went on to complete a Microvascular Surgery fellowship at Southern Illinois University and an Aesthetic Surgery fellowship at Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital in New York.

Whether consulting with Dr. Asaadi for a relatively small and simple procedure or multiple problems to be addressed during a lengthy, complex surgery, perspective patients undergo an extensive interview process with Dr. Asaadi and his capable and sensitive staff. He wants to get to know his patients and understand their goals and expectations so he can carefully explain the realistic outcomes of each procedure. Dr. Asaadi's ultimate goal is always the same. He strives for perfection.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call 973-731-7000 or visit www.asaadiplasticsurgery.com. ■