

ask the experts

Our pros address your pressing health concerns.



Q My friend mentioned she had a consultation with a holistic cosmetic surgeon. Isn't that an oxymoron?

a It's not as contradictory as it sounds, and it's actually a growing trend. "The surgical procedure itself is standard," says Shirley Madhere, M.D., a holistic plastic surgeon in New York City. "What's different is the pre- and postoperative care." Madhere asks her patients to clean up their diets and get into a fitness routine, along with trying homeopathy and other complementary interventions, for four to six weeks before and after surgery. "I want my patients to feel their best going into surgery and heal quickly afterward," she says.

Some mainstream doctors question the approach, and Madhere admits there isn't much research behind some of her favorite treatments, like homeopathic ointments for swelling and bruising. But anecdotally, she gets results. "The patient is taking responsibility for her role in the procedure, which is very empowering," she says.

There's no official certification for "holistic plastic surgery," but if you're interested in seeing this kind of specialist, Madhere advises seeking out an M.D. who's board-certified and has plenty of experience with the procedure you want, then asking if complementary medicine is something she's willing to incorporate into your treatment. "A good doctor will say, 'Huh, if you want to try arnica cream, I'll look into it,'" she says. "After all, as trendy as these integrative treatments may seem, they're actually hundreds of years old." — ANDREA BARTZ

A holistic plastic surgeon will prep you differently.