



Sleeping [to] Beauty

Two cosmetic surgery patient counselors share their surgery and anesthesia experience

by Stephanie Forte

If you could wake up from a deep sleep with a flatter tummy or more beautiful breasts chances are you'd fluff up your pillow and hit the sack. While the path to a more beautiful body isn't as simple as an afternoon nap, patients who choose to have plastic surgery often go under general anesthesia during their procedure. Though both surgery and anesthesia are serious matters, two Las Vegas women found that by having trust and confidence in their surgeon, they could rest easy.

After years of coaching patients through plastic surgery procedures as a patient counselor for one of Las Vegas' premier board-certified plastic surgeons

Dr. George Alexander, Jami Enger was ready to take care of the "pooch" on the bottom of her tummy. While in some cases Alexander will perform surgery under IV sedation or local anesthesia, Enger elected to have a mini-tummy tuck and liposuction, requiring a general anesthetic. "I had never been under anesthesia before this surgery," explains Enger, "and even though I'd eased other patients concerns about anesthesia, this time it was different because it was me."

By recalling the advice she gives patients day in and day out – find out if your anesthesiologist is board-certified and talk about your concerns with your doctor – her fear of the anesthesia experience lessened. As a member of Alexan-

Jami Enger (left) and Rachel McCormick, patient counselors for Dr. George Alexander, have both had positive surgical experiences using general anesthesia

der's staff she was well-aware of a few important points: his number-one concern is the safety of every patient. The anesthesiologists with whom Alexander works are board-certified and provide his patients with excellent care. Furthermore, as with all of Alexander's patients, Enger would be medically cleared prior to surgery. Knowing this she says, "My concerns about anesthesia just went away."

Rachel McCormick did her homework by researching numerous surgeons to perform her breast augmentation. "Dr. Alexander's office was the only office where I spoke with a counselor who provided me with a lot of information and answered my questions," says McCormick, who was so inspired by her experience with Alexander that she later joined his staff as a patient counselor.

Having been under anesthesia before, McCormick felt she'd selected the best surgeon to perform her procedure because her safety was his top priority. "I felt completely comfortable in his care. [Dr. Alexander] explained who would be administering the anesthesia, and provided the anesthesiologist's credentials," she says. "It was a comfort knowing I wouldn't be awake!"

Not all patients are hesitant of anesthesia. "Patients often request to be under anesthesia," notes Enger. "They've heard stories or have seen television shows that will show a patient having surgery in a doctor's office while awake. This scares them more than the anesthesia."

Both women know from their experiences as Alexander's patients and as patient counselors that by having trust and confidence in your surgeon, the surgical experience can be as wonderful as the results. They urge those considering plastic surgery to inquire whether both the surgeon and the anesthesiologist are board-certified, and to research their surgeon's skills by interviewing former patients, and checking with professional organizations on Web sites such as www.plasticsurgery.org, www.abms.org and www.surgery.org.

