



ASK THE DOCTOR

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One of Las Vegas' premier plastic surgeons, Dr. George John Alexander is a Board Certified Plastic and Cosmetic Surgeon. He is also board certified by the American Board of Surgery and the National Board of Medical Examiners. Founder and Chief of Plastic Surgery at Mike O'Callaghan Federal Hospital, Dr. Alexander is the current Chief of Plastic Surgery at Mountain View Hospital. He is a graduate of Georgetown University School of Medicine in Washington, DC. During his residency the United States government named Dr. Alexander the number doctor in his program.

Q:

I have noticed that as I've gotten older the half circle under my eye seems to look more puffy and swollen. My friend is finding that hers is looking more sunken in and hollow. In both cases, we feel it makes us look tired or worn-out. Are there procedures to correct these problems?

A:

The area around the eye can become surrounded by excess fat and skin as a result of aging or genetics, leaving a person looking tired, worn-out or sad. The loss of fat around the eye – also a by-product of aging – results in a hollow or sunken look. One of the top five cosmetic procedures for both women and men in the United States is blepharoplasty, the cosmetic eyelid surgery that can correct both of these problems. In fact, in 2004 over 230,000 people* decided to liven up the appearance of their eyes with this procedure.

Blepharoplasty removes excess fat and skin and readjusts the muscle around the upper and lower eyelids. In the lower eyelids, an inconspicuous incision is made typically beneath the lower lashes. Excess skin or fat can be removed through the incision, or the muscle can be tightened. Fat can also be redistributed, which will minimize puffiness and bulges around the eye or it can be transplanted to the eye to try to restore fullness. A transplant is less common than the usual blepharoplasty because most people suffer from having too much fat or skin around the eye.

Every patient's needs are different and though blepharoplasty can be performed as a single procedure, often times it's performed in conjunction with another procedure to revitalize the face. For example, many people opt to pair it with a facelift or a forehead brow lift to further improve the appearance of their face and upper brow. It's sometimes done with a non-surgical procedure like Botox or a special skin care regime that addresses sun damage.

The procedure takes approximately 90 minutes and is performed on an outpatient basis under a local or general anesthesia. Stitches are removed in approximately 3 – 4 days and patients can plan to resume most normal activity in about a week. They should, however, not do any strenuous exercise or lifting for at least one month after surgery.

Patients typically range from their early 30's to mid-70; and as with any cosmetic procedure, the ideal candidates are those in good health, that don't smoke, and that have realistic expectations.

*Statistics from the American Society of Plastic Surgeons



Dr. Mike Golpa has over 12 years of intensive specialization in dental aesthetics, full-mouth reconstruction and advanced implant dentistry. A member of the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, American Academy of Implant Dentistry, the International Congress of Implantology and the American, Nevada and California Dental Associations, Dr. Golpa has offices in Las Vegas and Los Angeles. Patients travel from all over the world to receive the benefits of his artistry, the creation of a unique, individually designed smile makeover for each patient.

As a strong supporter of women and children's rights, Dr. Golpa is a sponsor of the WIN (Women in Need) foundation and a member of the foundation's SMILE Dream Team.

Q:

I am in my 40's and worrying about replacing missing teeth. I have (or had) two premolar baby teeth (the permanent teeth never formed). One disintegrated and broke off at the gum and the other is loose. Now I have a missing tooth on the lower right side of my mouth and may soon have one on the left. Also, I have a jagged canine on the right side of my mouth that is very apparent when I talk or smile. It is causing me a lot of embarrassment but I'm not sure what procedures are best – I want to do what looks most natural and is best for the long-term health of my teeth and gums.

A:

Dental implants are the optimum choice for replacement of missing teeth, for a number of reasons. They are the closest in fit, appearance and function to your natural tooth and eliminate the need to grind down healthy adjacent teeth as you would for a bridge or partial denture. They won't slip, click or move as dentures can so you can comfortably eat, speak and smile with complete confidence. Dental implants do not decay or need root canal therapy, and perhaps most importantly, they are anchored in the jaw and help prevent further bone loss, which can be very important to your overall facial appearance. Bone helps support tissue and its loss contributes to facial aging, thinning of the lips, and the "collapsed" look of the lower part of the face that is so apparent when someone removes their dentures. Bone loss from missing teeth can also cause the remaining teeth to shift and loosen, worsening the problem.

Regarding your jagged tooth, sometimes a simple reshaping and contouring is all that's necessary to correct jagged, chipped, or slightly uneven teeth. For crowded, gapped, chipped or jagged teeth, in most cases porcelain veneers are the best option. Porcelain veneers can correct a variety of or combination of problems, completely changing the color, size and arrangement of teeth for a very dramatic improvement in your smile. Porcelain veneers are bonded securely to the tooth and the treatment is very conservative in most cases, requiring that only a minimal amount of the facial part of the natural tooth (.3- .5 mm) be removed for the veneer to be placed over that tooth. Veneers can give you the ultimate dazzling smile you've always dreamed of.