

## **WOMEN URGED TO GET THE FACTS BEFORE GOING UNDER THE NEEDLE**

Government launches campaign to make sure people know the risks of cosmetic procedures and where to find the information they need to make informed decisions about their care.

The campaign comes amid a rise in demand for procedures including Botox® and dermal fillers and growth in unregulated companies offering cheaper services.

A recent poll shows two thirds of women have had or are considering an aesthetic treatment.

Women are being urged to get "clued up" about the risks of cosmetic procedures as part of a new government campaign to help people make safer, more informed choices.

The campaign comes amid concerns about the number of women experiencing serious side effects or other harms. It encourages people to choose a suitably qualified and professional practitioner for their treatment.

The increasing affordability of cosmetic procedures, celebrity endorsement and the growth of social media have resulted in a significant increase in the number of women having Botox, dermal fillers or surgical interventions such as liposuction or breast augmentation in recent years.

A recent poll by Deltapoll for the BBC found two thirds of women have had or are considering an aesthetic treatment. This is fuelling a boom in the market for providing beauty procedures, with many providers increasingly using aggressive marketing techniques, including cut-price deals and prime time advertising, to compete.

An increase in unregulated companies offering cheaper services, some involving procedures carried out abroad, is also believed to be contributing to more people experiencing harm.

Serious complications of cosmetic procedures can include infection, nerve damage, blindness, blood clots, scarring, and in rare cases have resulted in death.

### **Health Minister Jackie Doyle-Price said:**

"Many people don't think fully about the consequences – both physical and mental – of having a cosmetic procedure. These are serious treatments, and you should think carefully before you leap in.

"I'm particularly worried about people seeking treatments which are unsuitable for them, or who are not prepared for the mental health impact of an aesthetic change.

"But we also need people to do their homework on the company or individual carrying out the procedure – if a deal looks too good to be true, then don't be afraid to walk away. The consequences of botched procedures can be dreadful."

This has prompted new government advice, published on [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk), setting out the questions people should ask before they undergo any cosmetic procedure, including:

- speaking to a professional about the outcomes you can expect;
- choosing a reputable, safe and qualified practitioner who is trained in the specific treatment and either a regulated healthcare professional (e.g. doctor or nurse) or registered with a body overseen by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA); and
- avoiding being pressured into making decisions on treatments without time to fully reflect.

A study at the Royal London Hospital found a six-fold rise from 2013 to 2018 in cases needing urgent follow-up care from procedures undertaken abroad, costing the hospital over £63,000.

The campaign will include print and digital content featured in Heat, Closer and Grazia magazines, and will signpost people to advice and guidance on NHS.uk if they are considering a procedure.

The advice and information for patients will be applicable to all types of cosmetic procedure, with a focus on the most popular types: Botox®; dermal fillers; breast augmentation; liposuction; and lasers and light treatments.

The government is also working with stakeholders and exploring options to strengthen the regulation of cosmetic procedures and improve standards. New legislation will take effect in May 2020 which will significantly strengthen the quality assurance and safety of dermal fillers on the UK market.

ENDS

#### **Notes to editors**

- Advice for people considering a cosmetic procedure can be found here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cosmetic-procedures/>
- We recommend practitioners should be registered with a body overseen by the [Professional Standards Authority \(PSA\)](#).

#### **ANNEX**

##### **Professor David Sines, Chair of the JCCP said:**

“The Joint Council for Cosmetic Practitioners (The JCCP) is a UK Charity that is committed to promoting public protection and patient safety in the cosmetic sector and as such is working in close partnership with the DHSC and other key stakeholder groups to promote and publicise the importance of providing members of the public with every opportunity to make informed choices about how to select practitioners who are appropriately experienced and trained to deliver safe and effective treatments in safe premises. The JCCP is delighted to be supporting the DHSC public awareness campaign and will be working concertedly over the forthcoming months to ensure that safety in cosmetic practice is disseminated and embedded.”

##### **Ashton Collins, Director, Save Face, said:**

“Save Face are delighted to participate in this campaign to help those seeking cosmetic treatments to make better informed choices. As a register of accredited practitioners our primary aim is to connect those seeking treatments with verified practitioners who meet our standards, but, we also help patients who have fallen foul to bad practice and have a unique insight in to the challenges patients face trying to navigate their way to a safe practitioner. We have been able to utilise the information gathered from our interactions with patients to help inform the campaign.

People seeking these treatments do not fall in the wrong hands because they are not risk adverse, it is generally because they don't know what to check, how to check it or what questions to ask. Inevitably, this leads to a decision that is based on the cost of the treatment rather than the credentials of the practitioner.

Education and public awareness are key. It is vital that anyone seeking treatment is equipped with the necessary information and resources that helps them to understand what the treatments are, how they work and the steps they can take to mitigate risk.

The campaign empowers people to take control and make a safe and informed choice about who they trust with their health and appearance. By supporting the campaign, we can make a real impact and significantly reduce the number of people who suffer unnecessary adverse events, complications and procedures gone wrong.”