

BEST FACE FORWARD: chin implants surge in popularity



Chin implants surgery increased more than breast augmentation, Botox and liposuction combined last year with both men and women opting for the procedure in nearly equal numbers, according to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons.

Over the last year **Dr. Darrick Antell** has performed up to three or four chin implants a day, reflecting a national trend that has seen chin augmentations emerge as the fastest growing plastic surgery trend of 2011.

After about a 45-minute outpatient procedure and a bill ranging from \$3,500 to \$7,500, New York-based Antell's patients emerge with what he said is a confidence boost: an athletic, youthful look from a more prominent chin.

"People want that leading lady, leading man look," said Antell, who is also an assistant clinical professor of surgery at Columbia University.

"If you look at people in the limelight, they all have strong chins and it's a part of the profile that has long been overlooked," he said.

Chin implants surged by 71 percent in 2011 as more than 20,600 adults went under the knife to sharpen their jaw lines, up from roughly 12,000 the year before, according to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons.

Strong chins are associated with leadership, confidence and honesty, Antell said, not to mention some powerful men and women.

"Romney's got a great chin," Antell said of the presidential hopeful. "Obama has a pretty good chin. Bill Clinton has a very good chin."

POPULAR AMONG MEN AND WOMEN

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Posting pictures on Facebook, online dating sites and the increasingly prevalent use of video chat technology like Skype and FaceTime make it harder to hide a person's least favourite feature or perceived flaws, said Dr. Malcolm Roth, president of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons and the head of plastic surgery at Albany Medical Center in New York.

"We tend to not look at what we don't like," said Roth. "I think there is a heightened awareness to how we look to the outside world."

The surgery is even appealing to people out of work, according to Roth, who said the cost hasn't deterred some who say it gives them more confidence at job interviews.

Chin augmentation can be done by putting a semi-solid implant on top of the chin, by moving bone to reconstruct the chin or simply by using a needle and syringe for an injection to enhance the chin, Roth said.

The procedure leaves minimal scarring from a very small incision and is sometimes coupled with micro-liposuction to trim a so-called double chin, enhancing the neck and jaw line even further.

Recuperation is easy and patients can typically be back to normal routines in a matter of days, Roth said.

Despite the chin implant boom, breast augmentation still reigns as the most popular cosmetic procedure. The surgery costs about \$10,000 more than 307,000 procedures were performed in 2011, statistics showed.

Antell said he expects the chin implants trend to continue, largely because of the quick recovery and low complication rate. He added that other similar, smaller scale procedures at a younger age are also likely to climb.

"This is an operation that whispers, it doesn't shout," said Antell. "Most people are not looking for huge changes, they are just hoping to look a little better, the best they can."