
Untitled Article Series

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UNTITLED 1 – IMPLANT SURGERY

Summary: *The selection of a dentist specializing in implant surgery requires necessary research on the part of the patient, who must also assume the final responsibility for choosing the best treatment options available based on medical history and sound professional advice.*

Implant dentistry has spearheaded a restorative health field that was hardly envisioned several decades ago. A wide array of treatment options can now be offered to patients to regain essential attributes necessary for good oral health. Because implantology is a highly specialized practice, careful attention must be directed toward selecting the right dentist if you are considering an implant as a health solution, or if you are a viable candidate for implant surgery.

Your family dentist, if not certified in implant surgery, should provide you with referrals to help set up your initial visitation or treatment consultation. As a patient, though, your first required task is to do your own research. In selecting qualified implant professionals, you should first look at their educational training and experience in implant dentistry, including the restoration of implants and the types of implants and procedures they endorse.

The importance of your preliminary research cannot be overstated. Sufficient competency in the performance of particular implant procedures — in addition to education and training in specific implant modalities — is paramount. The actual clinical experience of the implant dentist should be considered in your selection process, too, which is not to imply that the standard of care is less for a patient that receives treatment from a dental practitioner with limited clinical background. In fact, the same quality care should be exhibited whether the first implant or the hundredth is placed.

Many types of implants are available today for a wide array of medical purposes, and your dentist should have a working knowledge of the distinct advantages and disadvantages of those implant modalities employed for patient diagnosis and treatment. Some dental professionals point out that although several implant types may be widely used and accepted, it is not unusual for one particular system to be the standard of choice for a specific case. However, most practitioners agree that in most forms of treatment, more than one type of implant would satisfy quality care standards.

Finally, one of the most significant steps in your final selection of an implant professional is your granting of *informed consent* for treatment in writing. Not to be glanced over, this matter of legality is a protection for both you and your dentist. You should only give your informed consent after your prescribed treatment or treatment options and any foreseeable risks have been explained to your satisfaction through direct consultation and verbal dialogue. This discussion should also address the risks or ramifications of *not* moving forward with prescribed treatment.

It cannot be overemphasized that making an informed decision based on these medical consultations and your medical history is solely your responsibility, one that you must take seriously in order to begin treatment. Likewise, it is also your responsibility to comply with all treatment recommendations, including periodontal treatment and any necessary restorative therapy or additional procedures. As with any medical treatment, the prescription for a successful outcome will largely depend on your cooperation throughout all phases of treatment.

UNTITLED 2 – LADIES PAINT TIP

Ladies, how often have you or someone in your family tossed out plastic materials — boutique items, children’s toys, outdoor leisure furniture, vinyl fencing, shutters, miniblinds, and more — just because they weren’t the color you liked, or they had faded, oxidized, and lost their resilience? Well, no longer. Krylon has a spray paint for you that, with no priming or sanding, bonds securely to plastic and other surfaces and is safe for use on all children’s items.

Although Krylon’s Fusion for Plastic has been on store shelves for several years, many people are still not aware of its wide application use on plastic, hard vinyl, wood, metal, wicker, wrought iron, glass, plaster, ceramic, paper, paper mache, and other materials. The spray paint first received praise in 2002 from two leading consumer do-it-yourself magazines, earning a *Popular Mechanics* Editor’s Choice Award and a *HANDY* Innovation Award when previewed at a home improvement trade show.

Traditionally, painting plastic for the do-it-yourselfer was usually a nightmare. Even when applied to a primed and sanded surface, regular paint had a tendency to “puddle” during application, resulting in a sticky, uneven mess. Often, after drying, the newly painted surface would peel off in sheets. While paints for plastic had been in use on an industrial scale for many years, those formulations were simply not suitable for at-home use until Krylon’s breakthrough application of a resin additive previously used in another industry.

Manufactured by Sherwin-Williams Diversified Brands of Cleveland, Ohio, Krylon’s consumer products line includes a comprehensive selection of paints and finishes, ranging from general-purpose paints to specialty products to rust-preventative paints and primers. As with other Krylon products, Fusion for Plastic resists fading and chipping in outdoor exposure and yields an extremely durable, high-gloss finish, and a 15-minute drying time (dry to handle in one hour).

Available in 35 colors, the 12-ounce aerosol spray paint features an easy-touch 360-degree-dial spray tip and now comes in several new finishes: camouflage, hammered, metallic shimmer, and textured shimmer. As a core element of its environmental stewardship, Fusion for Plastic expects to enhance consumer satisfaction with plastic purchases while extending the lifecycles of older, used items, thereby possibly reducing the flow of plastics to landfills.

UNTITLED 3 – OHIO RADON

Not surprising, news media in Ohio are constantly reminding homeowners of the potentially ill effects of radon. After all, Ohio ranks high among Midwestern states in significant concentrations of the naturally occurring radioactive gas — a substance with no color, odor or taste.

The U.S. Surgeon General warns that radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer, just behind smoking. Estimates of annual deaths caused by radon have been as high as 20,000. The fact that radon can seep from the surrounding soil into the foundation of nearly any structure is noteworthy because Ohio's soils contain high concentrations of naturally decaying uranium and radium, which supply a constant source of radon.

Any residential, public or commercial structure has the potential for radon exposure, including new and old structures with or without basements. In fact, nearly one out of every 15 homes in the United States is estimated to have elevated radon levels, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

So, what is a high level of radon? The EPA considers four or more picoCuries of radiation per liter of air (pCi/l) to be above the safe level. In the central Ohio area, mostly Franklin County, random radon testing has revealed a median concentration of six pCi/l. In some instances, there have been zero levels of radon, while other tests have indicated levels as high as 417.7 pCi/l.

The good news about radon is that it is relatively easy to control. In many cases, the radon threat is preventable with some basic steps. In existing homes, families can begin protecting themselves by purchasing an easy-to-use radon test kit to determine if a high level exists. If so, an unsafe level might be lowered simply by installing an elementary radon venting system, in addition to sealing off radon entry points where possible. When needed, licensed radon mitigation contractors can be found easily in the *Yellow Pages* or through a local search on the Internet. In new homes, builders can economically include radon-resistant features during construction.

A short-term (three to seven days) home radon test kit can be purchased from Air Chek for only \$6.95 through its Web site, <http://ohio.radon.com>, or by calling toll-free 800-247-2435. Ohio homeowners may purchase up to three short-term test kits for additional verification. Long-term (90 days to a year) test kits are also available for \$29.95 each (discount prices of \$21.95 or lower for quantity purchases). Shipping cost, return postage, Air Chek's analysis, and the report of the test results are all included in the price. With its response, Air Chek will also include information regarding corrective measures to lower radon levels, if necessary.

Residents throughout most of Ohio can also obtain a free short-term radon test kit through their local government health agencies by contacting them directly or visiting their respective Web sites. Generally, these agencies will also answer any questions regarding how to conduct radon tests in the home or interpreting the results.

Although radon level measurements are not currently mandatory in Ohio's housing market, a potential buyer may ask for a radon measurement to be conducted if the structure is located in a designated high-radon area.

UNTITLED 4 – PLASTIC SURGERY

Summary: The growing obsession with plastic surgery, mostly of the cosmetic nature, is being attributed to a desire for greater self-esteem, rather than the more truthful admittance of sheer vanity and needed praise from others.

Much has been espoused over the last half-century regarding the value of plastic surgery and its reconstructive triumphs for victims of disfiguration from fires, vehicular accidents, disease, war tragedies, domestic and street violence, and childhood deformities. Without question, medical science has advanced the mission of restorative surgery beyond its founding roots. Just ask its younger sibling — cosmetic surgery.

Americans spent more than \$10 billion on nearly 9.5 million cosmetic procedures in 2010, including both surgical and nonsurgical procedures such as injections, skin rejuvenations and laser treatment. Women accounted for 92 percent of the cosmetic procedures, with breast augmentation being the most performed. Overall, cosmetic plastic surgery procedures for both men and women have increased 155 percent since their statistical tracking began in 1997.

The visible benefits of cosmetic surgery are indisputable — but at what cost? A young woman spends more than \$80,000 to achieve the *accepted* perfect look for a modeling career; a mother gives her 7-year-old daughter vouchers for cosmetic enhancements to be redeemed as she grows through adolescence and into young adulthood. The allure of better health is slowly being surrendered to aesthetic enhancements, promulgated by media hype and celebrity infatuation, while personal responsibility for healthy lifestyle habits such as proper diet, exercise, restful sleep and better skin care assumes a subordinate role.

Perhaps more disappointing is the rationale of attributing common practices of plastic surgery to a pursuit for self-esteem. Equating a fixation on cosmetic enhancement with a quest for self-esteem is intellectually hollow. By definition, self-esteem cannot be bestowed upon anyone by anyone. It is an intrinsic value, a self-ownership of pride that is honed through individual initiative and dedication in meeting challenges and overcoming obstacles.

This is not to say that plastic surgery cannot be a catalyst for self-esteem. On the contrary, serious patients of restorative medical procedures must often endure countless surgeries and painful recovery periods. Their self-esteem is embodied in their own victories for survival, trying to erase or mitigate the perceived ugliness of abnormality. Their pride and self-worth arise not from any quest for aesthetic enhancement but for that one chance to be normal, ordinary and part of the mainstream once again.

Unfortunately, cultural and societal pressures regarding outward appearance have instilled the need for validation from others to build self-confidence, that in order to be accepted, one must stand apart from the crowd. Individualism should always be lauded, but today a great void exists between what is considered a healthful, vibrant appearance and the extremes embraced by some individuals merely for aesthetic praise.

Advocates for untethered cosmetic enhancement would gain more favor among skeptics of plastic surgery if they would simply lay their claim for aesthetic appreciation at the feet of vanity, not self-esteem. However, do not begrudge vanity, either; it is integral with human nature and with the right dosage can be a great motivator for excellence in achievement. Just remember, though, even healthy obsessions can have undesired consequences if pursued without good judgment.

UNTITLED 5 – IDENTITY THEFT PREVENTION

Although identity theft is often connected to sophisticated Internet hacking, many cases of ID theft are still initiated through some form of personal contact with the actual thief. When you dine out, shop or travel, always be careful to safeguard your credit/debit card use. And the best way to do that is to never lose sight of your card while in use by a merchant or service employee.

Whenever possible, scan or “swipe” your own card via the electronic reader at the checkout counter or keep a watchful eye on anyone who does the scanning. Make sure that no one walks away with your card out of your immediate sight or turns your card over for any length of time to look at the information on the back, other than quickly checking your signature, if necessary.

The back side of any MasterCard, Visa and Discover credit card or debit card contains a card verification code (CVC) — also known as a card value verification code (CVVC) — which is typically three digits located to the right of the signature strip. On an American Express card, the CVC or CVVC is four digits, located on the front of the card to the right and above the credit card number. These codes are used primarily for online purchasing as an added protection against fraudulent use. Experienced thieves, however, are quite capable of capturing your card data, including the CVC or CVVC. By combining this stolen information with some address and telephone information, easily attainable through public records, an ID thief can go online, steal your identity and access your credit for use in any variety of ways.

Also, keep in mind that you do not have to lose your wallet, purse or credit/debit card to be a target for ID theft. For instance, one victim reports having his credit card used unknowingly for online purchasing for nearly two weeks even though his wallet and all of his credit cards were in his possession. Nothing was missing. So how did this theft happen?

This particular person was traveling by vehicle from the Midwest to a remote vacation getaway in Arizona. Over the course of three weeks, he used his credit cards for lodging, food, and fuel at numerous locations. Obviously, at one of these stops, an experienced (or maybe inexperienced) ID thief had access to the victim’s full credit card information, including the CVC or CVVC numbers. More than likely, the culprit was an employee of a services facility. Knowing the traveler was from out of state and would be on the road for a period time, the thief was able to use the information from the card — but not the card itself — to make online purchases totaling more than \$1,500. This unfortunate occurrence did have a good outcome for the traveler, though, following some anxious moments.

Upon returning to home and reading through his stack of mail and credit card invoices, the traveler realized he had been a victim of ID theft. He immediately reported the fraudulent incident to the credit card company, explaining where he had traveled, lodged and dined. He had never made any purchases online. The financial institution was understanding of his dilemma, and with its highly specialized investigative staff, was able to trace the theft to a computer IP address in an undisclosed location out West, thereby alleviating the traveler of any financial responsibility for the fraudulent purchases.

UNTITLED 6 – TEXAS LASIK

With Texas Lasik specialists located in nearly 50 cities across the Lone Star State, the only remaining question for eye patients should be, “Is Lasik surgery the best option for correcting my vision?” Well, about 700,000 people in the United States had such elective surgery performed last year alone.

Although a qualitative answer ultimately rests with you and your ophthalmologist or Texas Lasik surgeon, recent satisfaction surveys compiled by major eye care and refractive surgery organizations contend that at least 90 percent of patients report vision improvements ranging from 20/40 to 20/20. The respondents also claim they are able to perform most of their routine daily activities without corrective glasses or contact lenses. In other words, their quality of life has improved.

Lasik procedures in Texas have ascended as the preferred treatment for correcting nearsightedness, farsightedness, astigmatism and even some age-related vision loss. Only nearby Oklahoma rivals Texas in the number of Lasik eye centers, with services provided in nearly 40 cities. Eye patients located in the bordering states of Arkansas, Louisiana and New Mexico often find the widespread Lasik facilities in Texas to be a major convenience when it comes to traveling less distance for corrective treatment.

Convenience is only one factor, though, when considering Lasik solutions in Texas. Your initial move should be a thorough eye examination and full consultation with an ophthalmologist to determine your candidacy for Lasik treatment, the most favorable types of laser surgery available, their cost, and their overall effectiveness based on your age and medical history. Should you have any fears or anxieties regarding Lasik procedures, the best way to allay those concerns is prior to any surgery, when you can openly discuss your expectations of Lasik treatment with medical professionals.

As with any elective medical procedure, you must also ascertain the professional skill, experience and technical background of those Texas Lasik specialists who may be performing your corrective eye surgery. Be sure to ask direct questions regarding their individual success rates. Also, inquire about the types of laser technology they utilize in their procedures. Is it advanced or more traditional?

Also, always remember that Lasik is essentially reshaping the focusing system of your eyes by changing the shape of your corneas. While the healing period following the procedure is generally six months, a small percentage of surgeries — less than 10 percent — may call for some enhancement of the original surgery to achieve your desired vision improvement.

Finally, one of the most significant steps in your final selection of a Texas Lasik surgeon is your granting of *informed consent* for treatment in writing. Not to be glanced over, this matter of legality is a protection for both you and your eye surgeon. You should only give your informed consent after your prescribed laser treatment and any foreseeable risks have been explained to your satisfaction through direct consultation.

Should you decide to consider alternatives to the newer Lasik procedures, most Lasik professionals in Texas address other types of laser eye surgery — PRK, Lasek, Epi-Lasik, monovision Lasik and custom Lasik to name a few — in addition to non-laser vision corrective treatments such as CK, crystalens and corneal ring implants.