

# **Re-Facing Surgery: Choosing Facial Plastic Surgery after Weight Loss Surgery**

*featuring Benjamin Bassichis, MD, FACS, Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon*

You've done it! You've lost the weight, either from surgery or an intense weight loss plan, you've become physically active, and you've invested in a whole new wardrobe. And now, you quite literally don't fit in your own skin. When considering bariatric surgery, many patients are now aware that plastic surgery afterwards may be desirable to remove extra skin from their arms or abdomen. What many are less aware of is that the same problems of excess skin can occur in the face and neck. Correcting these facial issues after major weight loss can require as much special attention as re-contouring the body after such a drastic change.

## **How the Face Reacts to Weight Loss**

Benjamin Bassichis, MD, FACS, Medical Director of the Advanced Facial Plastic Surgery Center in Dallas, Texas, metaphorically compares the skin of the face to a ball that has been continually inflated then deflated; eventually the ball loses elasticity. A similar phenomenon occurs in patients after major weight loss, where skin hangs loose on the face instead of stretching over it, having lost its tone and texture. As a Facial Plastic Surgeon, Dr. Bassichis specializes exclusively in surgery of the face, head and neck. So when patients come to his office to remove the effects of weight loss from their face, Dr. Bassichis develops individualized strategies that will best fit their particular needs. "My patients have taken the most difficult, first step to health and self-esteem," Dr. Bassichis says, "I am here to help them complete their amazing transformations."

First, he must ensure that the patient is both mentally and physically able to accomplish further surgery, and make sure that the patient is far enough removed from their bariatric surgery. If weight loss is not complete, then cosmetic surgery may need to be postponed as additional weight loss may alter the results achieved. "We typically recommend that a patient's weight stabilizes for at least six months before they undergo these contouring procedures," Dr. Bassichis explains. As in all cosmetic procedures, the consultation is an important step in determining what procedures can be performed to achieve a patient's desired results and to establish realistic expectations. Then, Dr. Bassichis will evaluate the skin and underlying foundation of the face. Aging, as well as weight loss, can take a dramatic toll on the delicate structures of the face. If the patient clears all pre-operative tests, Dr. Bassichis will develop an aesthetic strategy tailored to the patient's desires.

## **Keeping Up Appearances**

The two aesthetic issues that often need to be addressed are the excess skin and loss of facial volume. "Paradoxically," reflects Dr. Bassichis, "the body looks better when it has less volume but, the face looks better when it has more volume." The excess skin is addressed first, usually with a facelift or necklift, which can be combined with other procedures such as a brow lift or blepharoplasty, depending on the individuals needs. Following this, Dr. Bassichis can address the issue of volume restoration in the face with FDA Approved facial fillers and/or fat transfer.

Complications like hematoma, bleeding, and other adverse events are no more frequent with post-bariatric patients than others, informs Dr. Bassichis. However, because their immune systems may be weaker, they are more prone to infection. With this in mind, Dr. Bassichis is extremely attentive to sterilization and excellent hygiene both during surgery and post-operatively to maximize all aspects of safety in your post-weight loss surgical experience.

Additionally, to further customize your post-weight loss surgeries, Dr. Bassichis has unique working relationships with leading General Plastic Surgeons also here in Dallas. Together, the two highly skilled surgeons can arrange to perform both your body and facial surgeries simultaneously, thereby minimizing your total surgery and anesthesia times.

### **Facial Image and Self Image**

With the significant health achievement of profound weight loss already accomplished, Dr. Bassichis feels privileged to help patients rejuvenate their faces. "Helping my weight loss and bariatric patients reveal their best facial image, has an amazing effect on their self-image," Dr. Bassichis expresses, "it is thrilling for me and my staff to watch our patients emerge feeling self-confident and radiant as we unveil their beauty within." Facial rejuvenation in this setting can be a psychological and emotional experience, as patients look in the mirror and are reunited with a version of themselves they haven't seen in a long time.