

## Upper East Side Plastic Surgeon Tells Teens When to Nip/Tuck Updated 3 hrs ago

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Upper East Side plastic surgeon Frederick Lukash has written a guide to teenage plastic surgery.



MANHATTAN — In the 30 years since he became a plastic surgeon focusing on adolescents, Dr. Frederick Lukash has become somewhat of an expert on hurtful teenage nicknames — from the girl dubbed “parrot beak” for her large nose to the boy taunted as “girly man” for his enlarged chest.

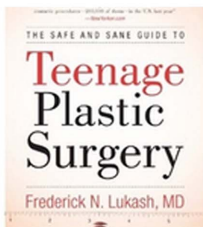
Now Lukash has written a book to help teens and their parents decide when it's the right time for plastic surgery, and how to know if they're making the decision for the right reasons, titled “The Sane and Safe Guide to Teenage Plastic Surgery” (BenBella; November 2010)

“I think I do good things for people. And I think the general public needs to have a voice of sanity out there,” said Lukash, who has an office on East 69th Street near Park Avenue.

The number of teens getting cosmetic procedures has been growing exponentially. An estimated 47,000 teens — aged 13 to 19 — had nose jobs and 9,000 had breast augmentations in 2002, according to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons. By 2006, more than 244,000 adolescents had some form of plastic surgery, the group found.

Lukash, a board-certified cosmetic surgeon who also practices on Long Island, said he frequently declines to put people under the knife when he sees a red flag.

For instance, he says he walks away when a patient's expectations are unrealistic, like when teens bring photos of celebrities to their consultations. He also declines to accept patients who come in with complaints about too many parts of their body, or if they seem unwilling to understand the inherent risks or limitations of surgery, he said.



(courtesy of F. Lukash)

“Plastic surgery is not the panacea for teen angst,” he wrote in the book.

Lukash said he wanted to restore dignity to the profession, which he believes has taken a hit in “the 24-hour news cycle,” where stories fixate on celebrities' plastic surgery or focus on plastic surgery gone terribly wrong, like when reality TV star [Heidi Montag](#), who rose to fame on the [MTV teen favorite “The Hills”](#) [about college students in L.A.](#), said she almost died from having 10 procedures in one day.

Lukash added that the threshold for calling oneself a plastic surgeon has plummeted.

“In my day, to be considered a plastic surgeon, you had to complete a general surgery residency and then I took another year of special training,” he recounted. These days, everyone from dermatologists to Ear, Nose and Throat doctors perform cosmetic surgery, he said.

And with the number of patients under the age of 18 representing at least 10 percent of the people getting plastic surgery, doctors who may not be attuned to young people's needs — including performing surgery around school holidays and understanding how to involve the entire family in decisions — are now desperate for teen business, Lukash warned.

“You need to be the type of plastic surgeon really interested in that group,” Lukash said. “You can't look at it as another way to expand your market by 10 percent. I spent my life in that 10 percent.”

The perception of plastic surgery has changed since Lukash's sister had a nose job in 1969 and didn't “broadcast it to the world” to now, when makeovers are a regular subject of conversation, he said. Even the nose job Lukash gave his own daughter is featured in his book.

Lukash also noted that teens often get plastic surgery for very different reasons than adults.

“Adult surgery is rejuvenative. They want to want to get back to where they were,” Lukash said. “To me, adolescent surgery is about feeling normal.”

The surgeon, who collects art and poems from his young patients that he uses in a traveling show called “Operation Art,” has kept in touch with many of his patients over the years.

One such patient, Genevieve Chapin, 21, of Queens, says she's still grateful to Lukash for performing surgery on her a decade ago to pin her back her ears. Chapin had a common case in which her ears were missing a piece of cartilage to keep them closer to her head.

“It was cute when I was little. But I was bullied in elementary school, called Dumbo,” she told DNAinfo. “When it was done, I felt relieved.”