

LIPOSUCTION

BEAUTY

THE IMPACT OF IMPLANTS

THE REDUCTION RESCUE

IS THIS YOU?

Adults, says Dr. Lukash, often choose plastic surgery because they're looking for a dramatic result, whereas teens want to blend in with their peers.

SINCE 1996, THE NUMBER OF TEENS HAVING PLASTIC SURGERY HAS NEARLY DOUBLED. IS THAT A HEALTHY CHOICE—OR A DANGEROUS TREND?

Most of us don't like some aspect of our appearance, whether it's ears that are too large or breasts that are too small. And lately, record numbers of teens are doing something about it: They're having plastic surgery. In 1998—the most recent year for which statistics are available—nearly 25,000 people 18 and under had cosmetic operations ranging from nose jobs to liposuction, up from 13,700 in 1996. But plastic surgery can be appropriate for kids if it's done for the right reasons and at the right time, says Frederick Lukash, M.D., a plastic surgeon who teaches at New York City's Albert Einstein College of Medicine. He won't perform plastic surgery on teens who are still growing or whose parents "want them to have something 'fixed.'" It's a way to change your body, he cautions, not "your life." But Joan Jacobs Brumberg, author of *The Body Project*, feels that many teens do think of cosmetic surgery as an easy way to boost self-esteem—a problem, she says, because "feelings of inadequacy generally don't go away [after surgery]." TEEN PEOPLE spoke with young people who decided to try plastic surgery—for better or for worse—and in one case, with a mother who faced the tragic consequences. Here are their stories.