

All I want for Christmas

How Botox and cosmetic surgery are now topping many women's gift lists

You can't put it in a box, wrap it in a bow or put it under the tree, and you will probably have to ask someone other than Santa for it! Bath bubbles and scented candles will simply not do. For a certain type of woman who has everything - including very generous family and friends - plastic surgery and cosmetic treatments could make the ideal present, according to ABC News: It reports that 'more and more women are opting for surgical procedures as Christmas presents, with Botox, tummy tucks and breast enhancements topping some of Santa's lists this year.'

Tina Franklin, from Orange County, in an interview with ABC News, explained that after a break-up with her boyfriend, she asked her sister for a present of Botox for Christmas, so she could start the New Year looking 'fresh!'

The news show reports that the area's local cosmetic surgeons are doing a busy trade at this time of the year, coping with the Holiday season boom in procedures.

'Living in Orange County, the Mecca of plastic surgery, you definitely want to do procedures, including Botox, to soften but not freeze' Ms Franklin said.

Dr Tenley Lawton, who Ms Franklin has chosen for her Botox, told the network that procedures run from a few hundred dollars for injections to \$15,000 for a tummy tuck and breast augmentation known as a 'mommy makeover.'

But Rajiv Grover, the president of the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons (BAAPS), said it was important to properly assess patients.

"Part of the assessment of a patient is psychological, to see how suitable they are for the procedure," he said.

Mr. Nick Percival FRCS, who has a private clinic in London and consults at the Aesthetic Skin Clinics in Guernsey and Jersey, says that Christmas is always a busy time, with demand fuelled by the long break. "People either want to get something done in time for Christmas or they want to use the break to hide away," he said.

He has seen a big increase in demand for many cosmetic procedures in the pre Christmas period.

"One of my ladies, a mother of five, is having something done while her husband takes the kids away skiing. Another lady doesn't want to bump into her friends after her facial surgery, so she will have it done now and emerge all fresh-faced. From mid-November right through till mid-December is a very busy time for us. What has been surprising for me, is that it is very busy during a time of supposed recession."

Statistics show that people are more willing to lavishly spend on a gift during the Christmas holidays than for a birthday. While such gifts are certainly generous, BAAPS strongly suggest that people who accept these procedures as Christmas presents are truly having them done for themselves. "The gift has to be self-motivated and not because the partner is interested," said Mr. Percival.

"It's also important that the recipient have real expectations about the results of the procedure and potential for complications. It has to be given with a lot of thought and hindsight and research. You have to make sure that there is a conversation to determine what the patient actually needs."

Dr John Curran, Fellow of the British College of Aesthetic Medicine [FBACM], said that the demand for Botox and fillers has also been high.

"There tends to be a rush of people in the couple of weeks running up to Christmas so they feel confident that they look their best over the party season. Our patients tend to time it, so they have the procedures completed a couple of weeks early, as it can take five to 10 days to fully stabilise."

Sheila Manners, from Orange County already knows what her husband, Harry, will buy her for Christmas, Botox!

"When you look good, you feel good," said Sheila, 76, who asks for the treatment to smooth out lines around her forehead every year. "He is so happy that he doesn't have to wonder what to get me."

Nurse practitioner Hayley Jordan, who works with Dr Curran and Mr Percival at the Aesthetic Skin Clinic in Guernsey, discusses which procedures are top of the Christmas list for their patients.

"The run up to Christmas is always a really busy time for us, as our patients want to look and feel fabulous during the Christmas and New Year break.

Our most popular treatments are combination technologies: facial sculpting and volumization procedures using fillers combined with Thermage or Intracel.

The subtle application of Botox to soften forehead lines, crow's feet and refine jawlines, referred to as the 'Nephrititi lift', is a treatment that is much in demand around the Christmas period. Patients are also keen to improve the quality of skin around the neck and chest area, and so Fraxel lite and IPL treatments are just what you need to restore and revitalize the décolletage, ready for that killer dress!

As tans begin to fade, Hair removal with Soprano is also very popular in the run up to Christmas. Everyone wants to be silky smooth for the party season. And to complete the pre Christmas transformation, 'power facials', including the new Obagi Radiance, will deliver the A list, red carpet-ready skin that all women REALLY REALLY want for Christmas.'



"Dr Curran's clinics are a mecca for those who want to try the very latest technology."

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