

I Love Plastic Surgery Interviews Presents: Dr. Mary Shinn



Certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery, Mary N. Shinn, M.D., has been in practice since 1990. She is one of only a few female plastic surgeons in the Houston area. Her special surgical interests include breast and body contouring as well as facial rejuvenation. Dr. Shinn's approach is gentle and caring while offering a woman's unique perspective for achieving the aesthetic result you are seeking.

"I am one of those fortunate people who enjoy getting up in the morning and coming to work. It is a privilege to help patients achieve their surgical goals and gratifying to watch them transform into more self-confident individuals. My staff and I are honored to care for you and we

strive to make your entire experience with us a pleasant one". ~ Dr. Mary Shinn

We are extremely fortunate to reach Dr. Shinn for an interview in between her busy schedule:

1. Can you start by telling us your name and provide me with your credentials.

My name is Dr. Mary Shinn, Board Certified Plastic Surgeon. I attended University of Texas Medical School in Houston and I have been practicing for 23 years.

2. Do you have any affiliations with any of your local hospitals or does your office have a surgical suite?

I'm part of owner of a surgery center, which is called the Museum District Ambulatory Surgery Center. I'm also affiliated with the Woman's Hospital of Texas, St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital, and Park Plaza Hospital.

3. So what made you want to become a plastic surgeon versus any other type of surgeon?

Well, when I went to college, I didn't know if I wanted to go into art or science. But my message from my parents was that I had to be able to support myself, so I thought perhaps I should stick with the science aspect of it. Once I had been in general surgery, I liked all that the plastic surgeons did and decided that was the direction I wanted to go to. It was more artistic than any of the other specialties, so that was what attracted me to it.

4. What are the most common surgery cases that you see in your practice?

I probably do more abdominoplasties than anything else. I worked a lot with the gynecologists at Woman's Hospital, and we do a lot of combination cases where they do a hysterectomy or a

bladder suspension, and I will do most commonly an abdominoplasty but often times breast surgery, liposuction, body contouring procedures along with that. So it's one anesthetic and one recovery.

5. What is the most common question you get from potential patients before they go through their surgical procedures?

Well, number one, am I a candidate for it, and will I be a good candidate for whatever procedure. First, I like to listen to what they want and what they think is their biggest problem. Because some people will say: "Look at me; if you were me, what would you do with me." And I always start off by asking: "What bothers you the most," because those are the areas I want to address first. Also, people want to know what the result is going to be like, what's the recovery period like. There's not one particular question, but they're just concerned about the result, if they're a good candidate for it, and show me some pictures so that I can see what it looks like.

6. What separates you or truly makes you stand out in regards to plastic Surgery from your colleagues in the area?

Well, I hate to use the gender thing, but there's just not that many women plastic surgeons in town. Despite how large Houston is, there's probably 10 or fewer of us that are plastic surgeons. There are facial plastic people, but as far as board-certified plastic surgery, there's just not that many of us. So that's one thing. I am certainly not perfect myself. I've struggled with my weight and can identify with a lot of the women that come in and have had their struggles, too. So I just think I can really identify with a lot of my patients.

7. Are there any particular trends that you see taking place within the next few years within plastic and cosmetic surgery?

Fat injections and fat grafting is becoming really resurgent. There's been a surge in interest in using a patient's own fatty tissue – liposuctioning it from one area and centrifuging it to separate the fat from any liquid that is in the tissue, and then re-injecting it into the face, buttocks, the breasts. Some people just don't even use an implant. If they just want a relatively small augmentation, then they can get their own fat injected, or you can use the fat in combination with a breast implant. As they get older and they lose volume in their face, you can re-inject fat into the cheeks and into the hollows under the eyes and just sort of rejuvenate a person with their own fat. Some people want more of a shapely rear end, and buttocks augmentation is good using fat. So that is a real big trend that's occurring in plastic surgery now.

8. What advice would you give your prospective patients that will read

this interview prior to considering plastic surgery?

Do what you can to get yourself in the best shape possible, then don't beat yourself up if your stomach's not flat like you want it to be or you can't get rid of that little extra pocket of fatty tissue somewhere; that's what we can do to help you. But try to do the best you can as a patient to stay healthy, exercise, and eat as well as you can to get yourself in as good a shape as possible, and then we can talk about doing the rest. We do a lot of what they call mommy makeovers and bariatric surgery in patients that have lost a lot of weight. So they've done a tremendous amount for themselves, and you reach a point where more weight loss is not going to help that saggy stomach or those breasts from sagging. You're going to have to intervene. But so many of my patients, that's what they've done. They've really tried to get themselves in as good a shape as possible, and then I can do the rest.

9. Why do you think so many surgeons are betting their practice on internet marketing?

I think it really appeals especially to the younger audience. I'm not sure that people late in their fifty's or sixties are the audience the internet is reaching. But certainly, it is the absolute way of connecting with the younger patient population – younger than 50. I'm 57, so younger than 50 is the young population. It really is the way people get information, so I think you'd be remiss in not taking advantage of the internet from a marketing standpoint.

10. What would you say has been the most effective marketing-wise for your practice so far?

To be honest, I get most of my patients from word of mouth and doctor referrals. I used to advertise in print back before the internet was popular, and I would get things, but I think that my website helps. I know when you look up certain procedures in Houston that I'm on the front page of results. For instance, earlobe repair. For some reason, if you look up earlobe repair or torn earlobes in Houston, Texas, I'm on the first page for that. Not sure how I got there, but I do a lot of those in the office, which are easy little procedures, then that leads to something else. You do a small procedure, and you talk to the patient while you're repairing their earlobe in the office, and pretty soon they're coming back and talking to you about a tummy tuck or a breast lift or something. So start off small, and often times it will lead to something bigger.

I've gotten several people who have told me they found by name by looking up a certain procedure on the web. But I don't really push the marketing as much. I have several colleagues that spend a bundle on website marketing, and that's great because the younger population is drawn to that and knows how to really use it.

11. If you could give another plastic surgeon or surgeon in general some advice if they read this, whether it be marketing or how they obtain new patients to build a practice like yours, what advice would you give them?

Take it one patient at a time. You just have to treat each person with as much respect as you can. Be patient with their questions. They might not sign up for surgery right away, but you may see them a couple years later when they're ready for something. Or they may refer somebody to you because they liked your manner. Just put the patient first.

We truly want to thank you for your time today Dr. Shinn. I know the Audience of "I Love Plastic Surgery" is going to love this and that it's really going to help patients make a better decision regarding the choice of their surgeon and assist other surgeons in helping them market their practice as successful as yours.

If you would like to know more about Dr. Mary Shinn, please visit her website at <http://www.maryshinnmd.com/> or contact her at (713) 522-4411 for a consultation.