Doctors say plastic surgery can help boomers look as young as they feel

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A little nip here. A small tuck there.

As cosmetic surgery continues to surge in popularity, Central Ohio baby boomers are in step with their national counterparts in seeking facelifts, breast augmentations and chemical peels.

Erin Hufford, marketing director of Columbus Aesthetic & Plastic Surgery, said baby boomers are a mainstay of the Columbus-based practice. "They are pretty much the majority of the demographic we see in our office," she said, adding that while cosmetic procedures are typically associated with women, men also have signed on to get rid of wrinkles and under-eye bags.

"There has been a significant rise in (male clients) in the last 10 years, especially with the popularity of injectibles. Men can have the same trouble spots as women." With cosmetic work becoming a focal point in today's pop culture, Hufford said, many baby boomers have shaken off old conventions of going under the knife.

"With how much it's on television and seen with celebrities, it's not as taboo," she said. "It's in the public eye."

Like the client base at Columbus Aesthetic & Plastic Surgery, many of the patients who rely on Dr. Jeffrey Donaldson to turn back the clock on their appearance are baby boomers.

"For many clients, (the desired procedure) is something they have always wanted and now they finally have the resources to do it," he said.

Donaldson, owner of Donaldson Plastic Surgery, agreed with Hufford that the old taboos surrounding plastic surgery are largely gone.

"It is so much more in the spotlight and many clients are comfortable talking about it," he said.

"There is not so much of a stigma attached to it. I've seen people who come in because they have a wedding coming up or a reunion or they are starting a new job or they've gotten a divorce and are looking to date again."

Unlike in decades past when clients often kept quiet about getting work done, Donaldson said, he has many baby boomers who get excited to film video testimonials for his website.

"As an office, we are strictly confidential but people are more comfortable about it than ever before," he said. "Some patients are definitely excited about it."

According to Plastic Surgery Portal, a network of certified surgeons, there are multiple reasons why baby boomers are opting to make cosmetic changes in larger numbers than other age groups.

Plastic surgery has become much more common for the baby boomer generation, as this age group tries to hang on to their youth for as long as possible," the website states.

"Because this demographic is such a large one, they have been responsible for shaping many of the trends in our country today. One such trend is the tendency toward plastic surgery of all kinds — from simple wrinkle fillers to full 'Mommy Makeovers' that include breast augmentation, breast lift and tummy tuck."

The website pointed to today's acceptability of plastic surgery as a reason for its widespread appeal and noted that with more cosmetic options readily available, it has become easier to select a procedure that offers the patient's desired outcome.

"With more procedures available than ever before, there are plenty of options for boomers to improve their appearance with safe, non-invasive treatments that provide stellar results," the site read.

Hufford said today's surgical and nonsurgical options have become too irresistible for many baby boomers to pass up. "One of the main things we see is that people don't want to look 'done' and with so many customized options, there is something for everyone," she said.

Results from the 2011 Plastic Surgery Statistics Report from the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, found that eyelid rejuvenation, nose reshaping, forehead lifts and liposuction were popular surgical procedures last year among clients age 55 and older.

Of the minimally-invasive procedures, wrinkle-reducing measures, such as Botox injections, topped the list while laser skin resurfacing, microdermabrasion and soft tissue fillers also were favorites.

"I always say that the goal is to set the clock back 10 years," said Dr. Jason Lichten, a board certified plastic surgeon. "With someone in their mid-30s that may not work but with baby boomers it is definitely reasonable."

Lichten said he's encountered many baby boomers through his practice, Central Ohio Plastic Surgery, who are looking to align their internal feelings with their outward appearance.

"The person they see in the mirror isn't a person they recognize and they want to look like themselves again," he said, adding that Mommy Makeovers have been a popular option for his female clients who have completed their families.

When it comes to breast augmentation and breast lifts, Lichten said, some baby boomers start off leery because the procedures can invoke mental images of Pamela Anderson and Heidi Montag.

"That look is far and few in between," he said. "A lot of these women are active and fit and even though they may want a bit more volume, they don't want to look too big."

Lichten said he doesn't believe the trend of baby boomers clamoring for cosmetic work will slow down anytime soon.

"Everyone has a different motivation," he said. "For some it's work pressure for others they want to match how they look on the outside with how they feel on the inside. People just want to fix what they don't like."