

Beauty 101: The Must-Know Advice Every Patient Should Hear First

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Dr. Sam Rizk | Face | Upper East Side

Thinking about your first treatment? You're not alone, and you're in good hands. First-time patients often have more questions than answers—and that's completely normal. To help ease those initial nerves and set the stage for a successful experience, we asked our Haute Beauty experts to share the one piece of advice they always give new patients. From setting realistic expectations to prioritizing education, here's what the pros want you to know before beginning your beauty journey.

As a facial plastic surgeon, I tell patients: *preparation is everything*. Choose a board-certified facial plastic surgeon who performs a high volume of procedures in this subspecialty. Your face is not the place for shortcuts—experience, precision, and specialization matter.

When undergoing surgery, it's essential to find someone who not only understands your anatomy, but also aligns with your aesthetic goals and has a track record of delivering natural, individualized results. Don't settle for a trend, a generalist, or a rushed consultation. Take the time to ask every question until you feel informed and confident. Ask about outdated practices like surgical drains, discuss scar management, post-surgical laser options, and diet and exercise expectations. And *always* review before and after images to ensure your surgeon's vision matches your own.

Before surgery, stop smoking, avoid alcohol, and commit to recovery. This isn't a lunch break treatment—it's a medical procedure. Healing is a process, and results evolve gradually. The best outcomes are subtle, refined, and never overdone—and the best way to ensure these results is by making sure neither the procedure nor the recovery is rushed.

The goal should be to enhance your natural features—not change you. Think timeless, not trendy.

For more information, visit Dr. Rizk's [website](#), [Instagram](#), or [Facebook](#)!

Victoria A. Cirillo-Hyland, MD, FAAD | Skin | Philadelphia, PA

We always tell first time patients that their visit is one point in time during the calendar year. If they suspect that a lesion is changing, (e.g. growing, bleeding, itching) they should call the office and not wait until their next appointment to have the issue addressed. We also tell them that we never get less information from a biopsy as the pathology result provides us with important information with regard to the diagnosis.

Our motto is: “When in doubt, we take the lesion out!”--biopsy and send for pathology review.

We also review the ABCDEs of melanoma:

- **A** stands for ASYMMETRY. One half of the spot is unlike the other half.
- **B** stands for BORDER. The spot has an irregular, scalloped, or poorly defined border.
- **C** stands for COLOR. The spot has varying colors from one area to the next, such as shades of tan, brown or black, or areas of white, red, or blue.
- **D** stands for DIAMETER. While melanomas are usually greater than 6 mm, or about the size of a pencil eraser, when diagnosed, they can be smaller.
- **E** stands for EVOLVING. The spot looks different from the rest or is changing in size, shape, or color.

Flawless by Melissa Fox | Day Spa | Coral Gables, FL

When it comes to skincare, my number one piece of advice is simple but powerful: start slow and build smart. My philosophy has always been “progressive, never aggressive.” It’s tempting to jump into strong treatments right away, especially with all the hype around quick fixes—but your skin deserves a more thoughtful approach.

The first step? Strengthen your skin barrier. This foundation is crucial for long-term results. Without a healthy barrier, your skin can’t properly absorb products or handle advanced treatments. I always tell my patients: we’re not just treating your skin today—we’re conditioning it for what’s ahead.

By starting with barrier repair and hydration, we create resilience, so your skin can truly thrive as we gradually introduce more active ingredients and treatments. Patience, consistency, and the right guidance make all the difference.

Dr. Dmitriy Schwarzburg, Skinly Aesthetics | Medical Spa | New York, NY

When meeting a first-time patient, I always stress the importance of realistic expectations and individualized treatment. Aesthetic medicine is not about achieving perfection or looking like someone else — it’s about enhancing your own unique features in a way that’s natural and harmonious. Every face is different, and there’s no one-size-fits-all approach.

I take time to explain that many aesthetic goals can be achieved gradually, with subtle, incremental changes. Whether it’s your first time exploring Botox, fillers, or a more advanced treatment like Ellacor or Fraxel, it’s critical to understand that the best results often come from a combination of procedures done strategically over time.

I also encourage patients to prioritize trust and communication with their provider. Don’t be afraid to ask questions. The more informed you are, the more empowered you’ll feel in your journey.

Lastly, I remind every patient that aesthetic medicine is both science and art. The goal is not to “fix” anything — it’s to reveal the best version of you.

Heather Merlo, Sei Tu Bella Aesthetics | Medical Spa | Tampa, FL

The most important concept that I would stress to new clients would be that when choosing an aesthetic provider, select a credible practice where you feel genuinely comfortable and supported. When you’re at ease, you’re far more likely to open up about your concerns, goals, and expectations, allowing you and your provider to align on a treatment plan that’s truly customized to you. That sense of comfort often comes from working with a provider who is confident, knowledgeable, and dedicated to their craft.

Look for a practice that not only makes you feel seen and heard but one that aligns with industry leaders and stays at the forefront of innovation. At Sei Tu Bella Aesthetics, we are proud to be a Key Opinion Leader for INMODE—the device manufacturer behind the world-renowned Morpheus8 technology—as well as Quantificare 3D imaging, EPICUTIS medical skincare, and Toskani Med regenerative serums. We believe in elevating patient care through ongoing education, hands-on training, and clinical excellence.

Trust your instincts. Schedule consultations until you find a space that feels like home, where safety, science, and artistry come together. A place that invests in your results, your wellness, and your confidence. Because the right provider doesn’t just treat your skin—they empower your transformation.

Aesthetic Island NYC | Medical Spa | Brooklyn, NY

The advice I always give first-time patients is to be kind to yourself and trust the process. Starting any aesthetic journey can feel overwhelming, especially if it’s your first time. It’s completely normal to have questions or feel unsure, but that’s exactly why we’re here.

Before anything else, I take time to really listen to your goals, concerns, and expectations. From there, we work together to create a personalized plan that feels comfortable and empowering, not rushed or based on trends. My goal is to enhance what’s already beautiful and help you feel confident in your own skin.

This journey is not about perfection; it’s about feeling good, inside and out. Take it step by step, stay patient, and always remember you deserve to invest in yourself.

Dr. Sarah Khan, ARA Med Spa | Medical Spa | Los Angeles, CA

Advice I would give to first-time clients is before any aesthetic treatment to request a detailed consultation with your practitioner and create a list of questions so you can have all your questions answered during the consultation. It is important during the consultation to clearly explain your goals and expectations to the provider so that they can assess whether the treatment can achieve those goals or an alternative treatment would be more appropriate and cost effective. The consultation also provides you with pre and post procedure instructions which are written for health and safety and to give you the best

possible treatment results. Some examples of specific pre procedure instructions for Hydrafacial include discontinuing any products containing exfoliants (glycolic acid), benzoyl peroxide or retinol prior to the treatment. If you routinely receive neurotoxin injections, it is important to wait at least 2 weeks before having a HydraFacial. Post treatment instructions usually will provide guidance about when to restart your workout routine, resume your skincare routine and the importance of sun protection.

S. Manjula Jegasothy, MD, FAAD | Skin | Coral Gables, FL

The first thing I tell any new patient is this: no matter what treatment or skincare product you start with, long-term maintenance is everything. Aging isn't a one-time event — it's a continual process. We're constantly exposed to gravity, pollution, UV rays, and even the electromagnetic waves from our devices, all of which accelerate the breakdown of collagen and skin structure.

And let's not forget: we're all getting older every day — the only real alternative is not being here at all. So the goal isn't to "stop" aging, but to manage it intelligently. Think of skincare and aesthetic procedures like working out or eating well — they're part of a lifestyle, not a one-and-done fix.

My patients who understand this mindset see the most beautiful, lasting results. It's not about chasing youth — it's about protecting and enhancing what you have, consistently and mindfully, over time.

Iani Silveira, Bella Vida Aesthetics & Wellness | Medical Spa | Miami, FL

Here's the deal: Start with *your* goals, not whatever's trending on TikTok. What looks great on someone else's face (or feed) might not be the move for you."

Also—important PSA—if your provider looks a little crazy... there's a good chance *their work will too*. Choose wisely.

At our clinic, we're here to enhance *you*, not turn you into a Snapchat filter. We focus on personalized, regenerative treatments that actually make sense for your face, body, and long-term health. No pressure, no gimmicks—just results that still look like *you*, only better.

Dr. Anna Chacon | Skin | Miami, FL

One of the most important pieces of advice I give first-time patients is to be kind and patient with themselves, especially when it comes to skin health. Whether someone is struggling with acne, hair loss, or signs of aging, I emphasize that real results take time and consistency. Skincare is a journey, not a quick fix. I also remind my patients that what we see on the surface is often connected to internal health and daily habits, so holistic care is key. Lastly, I always encourage open communication: the best outcomes happen when we work as a team, and patients feel empowered to share their concerns and ask questions.

Dr. Daniel Careaga, Careaga Plastic Surgery | Body | Miami, FL

Every patient has a unique vision and starting point, and I do not believe in a one-size-fits-all approach. During that first consultation, I encourage you to share everything you can. From the results you are hoping for to your daily routines, and what you expect from recovery. That kind of honesty allows me to create a plan that is safe and truly tailored to you.

I also tell patients to do their research. Look into the surgeons you are considering. Verify their board certifications, review their before and after photos to see if their aesthetic aligns with your goals, and ask how many times they have performed the procedure you are interested in—experience and consistency are key.

Lastly, recovery is just as important as the procedure itself. Following instructions, showing up to follow ups, and allowing your body time to heal will help ensure the best outcome. Choose a surgeon who feels right to you, one you trust and connect with. That confidence makes all the difference.

Dr. Aya Ahram, Hudson Dermatology and Laser Surgery | Skin | New York, NY

I always tell them that they are the best advocates for themselves and their skin! As much as they depend on me, I depend on them in terms of being consistent with their routine, seeing how their skin is responding, and being mindful of changes that their skin is undergoing. Whether it is something we are actively working to treat and manage, or those coming in once a year for their annual skin check, I believe that this philosophy applies. I get snapshots when I see them, so I do my best to counsel and educate, but I also really have trust in my patients that they will reach out to me if they notice anything changing in a way that we don't expect, rather than brushing it aside.

Dr. Husam Almunajed | Smile | New York, NY

The one piece of advice I always give first-time patients is this: don't rush the process—your smile deserves more than a quick fix. Too often, patients come to us after being let down by rushed treatments or results that didn't last. At Empire Dental Aesthetics, we believe lasting confidence comes from doing things the right way, not the fast way. That starts by listening—really understanding your concerns, your goals, and your oral health from the inside out. We study your gums, bite, bone structure, and overall health to craft a treatment plan that supports long-term results. Every phase is done with intention—no shortcuts, no compromises. Because a truly beautiful smile isn't just about how it looks today—it's about how it functions, how it feels, and how it holds up over time. So my advice? Be patient. Invest in the process. When it's done right, you'll not only see the difference—you'll feel it every time you smile.

Dr. Jose Rodríguez-Feliz | Eyelid Surgery & Face | Miami, FL

The one piece of advice I always give first-time patients is this: choose your provider carefully, because it's the most important decision you'll make on your aesthetic journey. In a field where treatments are elective, safety and trust are non-negotiable. Aesthetic medicine may be about enhancing appearance, but the foundation should always be operational excellence, transparency, and patient-centered care. Ask questions—lots of them. How often does your provider perform this treatment? What does their patient safety protocol look like? Can they show you consistent, real results? If the answers aren't clear or confident, that's a red flag. Beyond credentials, look for someone who's invested in refining their craft, building a strong team, and creating a culture where communication flows easily. At the end of the day, the provider-patient relationship is key—you should feel heard, understood, and supported at every step. When you find that, you're in the right hands.

Dr. Kiran Gill, Naples Aesthetic Institute | Body | Naples, FL

As a first-time plastic surgery patient, the most important piece of advice I can offer is to prioritize thorough research and self-reflection before making any decisions. Understand that plastic surgery is not just a physical transformation; it's an emotional journey that requires careful consideration of your motivations and expectations.

Start by researching qualified and board-certified plastic surgeons. Look for reviews, before-and-after photos, and testimonials from previous patients. Schedule consultations with multiple surgeons to discuss your goals and get a feel for their approach and expertise. This will help you find a surgeon who aligns with your vision and makes you feel comfortable.

Equally important is to reflect on your reasons for seeking surgery. Are you looking to enhance your self-esteem, or are you trying to meet external expectations? It's crucial to ensure that your motivations are rooted in self-empowerment rather than societal pressures. Remember, the goal of plastic surgery should be to enhance your natural beauty and boost your confidence, not to conform to an ideal.

Ultimately, take your time, ask questions, and trust your instincts. This is your journey, and it should be one that makes you feel empowered and excited about the future.