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Cosmetic Surgery Patient Acquisition Guide 2026

9 channels, consult-to-procedure conversion math, the 14-touch nurture sequence, and full-funnel benchmarks for aesthetic practices — based on \$6M+ in managed spend across 22 practices.

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52 pages · Updated Q1 2026 · For aesthetic practice operators

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01

Aesthetic Patient Acquisition Landscape 2026

The cosmetic surgery market is growing at 9.3% annually — but patient acquisition cost is rising faster than revenue for most practices. The gap between top-quartile and bottom-quartile practices on cost-per-consultation is now 3.8x.

| | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| \$120-\$380 | 28-45% | \$4,800 | 9.3% |
| Avg cost per consultation | Consult-to-procedure rate | Avg procedure revenue (non-surgical) | Annual market growth rate |

The three forces reshaping patient acquisition:

- **Instagram and TikTok are now the primary discovery channel** for under-40 patients. 67% of cosmetic surgery patients under 40 report discovering their practice via social media before any other channel.
- **Before/after content is the highest-converting asset class** — but Meta and Google have tightened policies significantly. Navigating ad policy without triggering disapprovals is now a core competency.
- **Financing is a conversion requirement, not a differentiator.** 58% of cosmetic procedures under \$8,000 are financed. Practices without CareCredit or Alphaeon in their funnel are converting 20-30% fewer consult-to-procedure.

02

The 9-Channel Patient Acquisition Framework

| Channel | Avg Cost/Consult | Consult-to-Proc % | Best Procedures | Budget % |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Google Search (branded) | \$45-\$90 | 38-52% | All | 10-15% |
| Google Search (non-brand) | \$160-\$340 | 22-32% | Rhinoplasty, BBL, liposuction | 20-25% |
| Meta / Instagram (photo) | \$80-\$180 | 18-28% | Breast aug, non-surgical, body | 15-20% |
| Meta / Instagram (video) | \$60-\$140 | 20-30% | Before/after journeys, consultations | 10-15% |
| TikTok Ads | \$40-\$110 | 12-20% | Non-surgical, younger demographics | 5-10% |
| YouTube pre-roll | \$30-\$80 | 8-14% | Complex procedures, high end | 5-8% |
| Influencer / UGC | \$55-\$130 | 22-35% | Injectables, non-surgical, body | 10-15% |
| Local SEO / GMB | Organic | 30-45% | All — especially local search | Agency fee |
| Email nurture (existing DB) | \$8-\$25 | 35-55% | Re-engagement, upgrades | Minimal |

03

Google Ads for Cosmetic Surgery

Cosmetic surgery is a restricted category on Google. Ads cannot claim specific outcomes ("look 10 years younger") or use before/after imagery. Understanding policy is table stakes before spend.

Campaign structure for aesthetic practices:

- **Campaign 1 — Branded:** Practice name + surgeon name. Essential. Max CPC, no impression cap.
- **Campaign 2 — Procedure-specific (exact):** "rhinoplasty [city]", "breast augmentation [city]". \$180-\$280 target CPC.
- **Campaign 3 — Non-surgical (phrase):** "Botox near me", "fillers [city]", "non-surgical nose job". \$90-\$160 target CPC.
- **Campaign 4 — Comparison/research:** "rhinoplasty cost", "breast aug recovery time". Lower CPC, longer decision cycle. Retarget aggressively.
- **Campaign 5 — Competitor:** Careful with trademark policy. Use surgeon name searches where not trademark-protected.

Procedure-specific CPC benchmarks:

| Procedure | Avg CPC | Avg CPL (consultation) | Search Volume (US/mo) |
|---------------------|----------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Rhinoplasty | \$8-\$18 | \$180-\$340 | 165,000 |
| Breast augmentation | \$6-\$14 | \$140-\$260 | 201,000 |
| Liposuction | \$5-\$12 | \$120-\$220 | 135,000 |
| Brazilian Butt Lift | \$7-\$16 | \$160-\$300 | 89,000 |
| Tummy tuck | \$6-\$13 | \$130-\$240 | 110,000 |
| Facelift | \$9-\$22 | \$200-\$380 | 74,000 |
| Botox / Dysport | \$3-\$8 | \$65-\$140 | 450,000 |
| Dermal fillers | \$4-\$10 | \$80-\$160 | 280,000 |
| Eyelid surgery | \$7-\$18 | \$160-\$300 | 62,000 |

04

Meta and Instagram: The Aesthetic Creative Playbook

Meta is the primary visual discovery channel for aesthetic procedures. The creative strategy determines 80% of results — audience targeting matters far less post-iOS.

| Creative Format | Hook | Avg CTR | Avg CPL | Policy risk |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------|------------|-------------------------------|
| Before/after carousel | Transformation-led | 2.4-3.8% | \$70-\$130 | HIGH — requires careful setup |
| Patient video testimonial | "I was nervous about..." | 1.8-2.9% | \$80-\$150 | LOW |
| Surgeon explainer video | "Here's what to expect..." | 1.2-2.0% | \$90-\$170 | LOW |
| Procedure walkthrough (Reels) | Day-in-the-life format | 2.0-3.2% | \$60-\$110 | MEDIUM |
| Myth-busting static | "5 myths about rhinoplasty" | 0.9-1.6% | \$55-\$100 | LOW |
| Pricing transparency post | "Here's what a BBL costs" | 2.8-4.1% | \$45-\$90 | LOW |

Before/after ads on Meta: Must use "Special Ad Category: Social Issues, Elections, or Politics" — NOT healthcare. Before/after imagery allowed under this category. Images must not show nudity or graphic content. Always add disclaimer: "Results may vary."

06

The Consult-to-Procedure Conversion System

| | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 28-45% | 18% | 3.8x | 58% |
| Healthy consult-to-proc rate | Industry average | Revenue gap top vs bottom quartile | Procedures under \$8K financed |

The 5 consult conversion levers:

- **Consultation prep sequence:** 3 emails before the consult: what to expect, what to bring, surgeon bio. Practices running this see 22% higher show rate and 31% higher same-day booking.
- **Financing presentation at consult:** Present financing options during the consult, not after. "We work with CareCredit — most patients pay about \$X per month." Removes sticker shock as an objection.
- **Same-day booking incentive:** "Book today and we can lock in this pricing for 30 days." Not a discount — a commitment mechanism. Increases same-day booking 28%.
- **Surgeon-to-coordinator handoff:** Immediate handoff after surgeon leaves room. Coordinator closes the booking while momentum is high.
- **Post-consult follow-up (24 hours):** Personal call from coordinator — not automated. "I just wanted to see if you had any questions after meeting with [surgeon]." 3x better than email follow-up alone.

07

The 14-Touch Nurture Sequence for Aesthetics

The average cosmetic surgery decision takes 4-6 months from first inquiry to booking. Practices with structured nurture convert 2.4x more leads than those relying on manual outreach.

| Touch | Timing | Channel | Content theme |
|-------|----------------------|--------------------|---|
| 1 | < 2 hours | Email + SMS | Welcome + consultation booking link |
| 2 | 4 hours (if no book) | SMS | "Take 60 seconds to book your free consult" |
| 3 | Day 1 | Email | Procedure overview + surgeon credentials |
| 4 | Day 2 | Call (coordinator) | Personal outreach — answer any questions |
| 5 | Day 3 | Email | Patient testimonial video relevant to enquiry |
| 6 | Day 5 | SMS | Before/after gallery link for their procedure |
| 7 | Day 7 | Email | "What to expect at your consultation" |
| 8 | Day 10 | Call | Second personal call — financing mention |
| 9 | Day 14 | Email | Recovery timeline + FAQ for their procedure |
| 10 | Day 18 | SMS | "Only X slots available in [month]" |
| 11 | Day 21 | Email | Financing options + monthly payment estimate |
| 12 | Day 28 | Call | Final personal outreach — value reinforcement |
| 13 | Day 45 | Email | Newsletter — recent results, new techniques |
| 14 | Day 60+ | Email | Quarterly touchpoint — seasonal campaign |

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Compliance: HIPAA, Meta Health Categories, Ad Policies

Cosmetic surgery marketing operates in one of the most policy-restricted advertising environments. Non-compliance costs range from ad account suspension to HIPAA fines.

- **HIPAA and retargeting:** Do NOT use pixel data from consultation forms to retarget. Use broader audience signals (website visitors, video viewers) only. Never retarget based on specific procedure inquiry.
- **Meta health categories:** Cosmetic surgery ads fall under health/wellness restrictions. Cannot use detailed targeting based on health interests. Use broad + lookalike audiences only.
- **Before/after imagery:** Allowed under "Social Issues" special ad category on Meta. Always include results disclaimer. Cannot show nudity.
- **Google healthcare policy:** Cannot claim specific outcomes. Cannot use superlatives ("best surgeon in NYC") without qualification. Cannot target by medical condition.
- **Review compliance:** Cannot offer incentives for reviews (violates Google TOS and FTC guidelines). Solicit reviews, do not incentivise them.
- **Testimonials:** Must represent typical results. Add disclaimer: "Individual results may vary. Consult with our team to understand realistic outcomes for your situation."

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10 Actions to Implement This Week

- **Audit your consult-to-procedure rate** by procedure type. If below 28%, the problem is the consult experience, not lead volume.
- **Add financing to your consult presentation** — present monthly payments before annual cost.
- **Build a 3-email pre-consult sequence** to increase show rates and same-day booking.
- **Set up Instagram and TikTok business accounts** if not active. Start posting 3x per week minimum.
- **Shoot one patient testimonial video** (60-90 seconds, natural language, no scripting).
- **Add before/after gallery to your website** — procedure-specific pages with 10+ cases each.
- **Review your Meta ad account** for policy compliance — especially Special Ad Categories setup.
- **Integrate CareCredit or Alphaeon** if not already offering financing.
- **Build a 14-touch email/SMS sequence** in your CRM for all new inquiries.
- **Set a lead response SLA** — coordinator calls all new inquiries within 2 hours during business hours.

Want this built for your practice? GrowthwithBA runs full patient acquisition programs — Google Ads, Meta, Instagram, nurture sequences, and consult conversion optimisation. Free audit at growthwithba.com/contact