

VENICE PLASTIC SURGERY

A.E. HAAS, M.D.

Cosmetic, Reconstructive, Face, Breast, and Hand Surgery

Wounds - Operate for necessity

A patient wanted a crooked toe removed, it was there the same way for years. I told him to leave it alone unless it got infected or caught on something. On the other hand it should be removed if there is a potential problem in the future, remove before it gets infected is best.

The answer is not always simple. Should we operate or not? This patient is diabetic and the remaining wound may get infected from the toe removal procedure. If you leave the toe there, hanging out to the side you invite trouble. It may catch something and tear open. Then the toe, followed by the foot gets infected. It may travel up the leg and cause gangrene. It happens just as that some times.

As a plastic and reconstructive surgeon a lot of what we do is reconstruction for burn victims, skin grafts, repair severed fingers and make new body parts removed from cancer operations. We also do procedures for body enhancement. These are cosmetic procedures. They may not always be necessary but are among the safer procedures, usually outpatient. Is it necessary? Who knows?

Often we treat recurrent toe infections time and time again then the patient comes in one day and tells me to take it off. If the diseased toe is not there it cannot cause a problem again. I will have a discussion with the patient. We will discuss the options available, the risks of each type of treatment or the risks of no treatment. We mull over the chances of success, the possibility of having to do additional procedures. What are the lifestyle changes that may be involved? What are the benefits?

The treatment for each patient is not something one can read in some book. It is rarely a black or white solution. The answer is almost always in the grey zone. The interaction of the doctor and the patient is very important. You have to look at the details but also the big picture. Caring for people is a medical and a social issue. We are not just scientists but also social service providers, friends and your associate in life. The bond between a doctor and a patient is like no other.

**The above represents the opinion of A. E. Haas, M.D.
Venice Plastic Surgery, Venice Wound Center, Lakeside Medical Center**

Just call us directly. No referral needed unless required by your insurance company

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