



# SKINdeep

## Mummy makeover

The talk of the town is all to do with teenagers heading to the plastic surgery clinic for bigger breasts. But Emmaline Stigwood discovers the real trend is about mothers recapturing their youth

**THE** Gold Coast is arguably the cosmetic surgery capital of Australia.

And the number of people seeking to improve their appearance, from minor face lifts to major surgery, is increasing.

However, local doctors say recent chatter about an influx of younger women, teenagers even, having breast augmentation surgery is just media hype and wishful thinking on behalf of some in the industry.

Those girls lining up to celebrate their 18th birthday with a boob job are few and far between.

In reality, mothers who want to regain their pre-baby figures are more likely to have cosmetic surgery and are doing so with more frequency and confidence.

The Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons Gold Coast representative

Dr Craig Layt says younger women represent about the same proportion of patients as in the past.

“There has been an increase of plastic surgery in general and we are the cosmetic surgery capital of the country, especially for breasts and liposuction,” he says.

“But what happens with this industry is a lot of people push a line for self-interest.

“So you get into the situation where people are saying things like there is a huge increase in younger women coming in because they hope it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

“I have spoken to my colleagues and really we don’t think there is a disproportionate increase in the number of young people having surgery as compared to others.”



**Mother of two, Gwyneth Paltrow, says a ‘boob job’ after breastfeeding is more reconstructive surgery than cosmetic surgery**



## ▼ Mother's little helper

**DR LAYT** says the reverse is actually happening.

"The people I have seen an increase in are the post-baby ladies," he says.

"Women are coming in saying they want their breasts back to the way they were before and they want a flat tummy again.

"They come to me and say I have done everything for my family, it's time for me. The reason, I think, has to do with a buoyant economy in the past 10 to 15 years.

"In the past a lot of people

would have been struggling with the mortgage or school fees and the like.

"The last person in the disposal-income stream is nearly always mum.

"But now we are seeing women who say 'the mortgage is under control, the kids are at good schools, we have a spare \$10,000, it's time to get my breasts sorted out'.

Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery fellow Dr John Flynn, based at Ashmore, agrees.

He says older women have

always made up the greater proportion of patients and changes in attitudes means mothers now see surgery as an option for fixing problem areas.

"An 18-year-old girl getting breast implants for her birthday might sell newspapers, but it isn't true," he says. Far more common are older women who've had their last child a couple of years ago and want to put something back.

"Recapture their youth a bit."

## ▼ Real life

**BURLEIGH** Waters mother Brooke Crossley, 29, says she had breast surgery two years ago after two children left her 'feeling empty'.

"I was never huge and I'm not now," she says.

"I was just wanting to fill up what I lost because after the children my chest was empty.

"I am happy to talk about it because I am so pleased with the outcome."

Catherine Romano of Palm Beach says she decided to have breast augmentation earlier this year for the same reason.

After breast feeding, Catherine, 27, set about saving for the surgery.

She says she always wanted larger breasts and when her son was two years old, she thought the time was right.

"After breast feeding, my body changed and my breasts changed," she says.

"After having my son, everything got a bit saggy.

"I'm not lazy, I go to the gym so it is not like I just have surgery.

"I have always wanted bigger boobs and I thought now was a good time."

Along with breast implants to take her to a D cup, Catherine, 27, had laser eye surgery to improve her vision.

"It's not like I am better than before but my confidence is a little higher.

"If I have more children I'd probably have liposuction on my legs and tummy."

## ▼ Why me

**DR LAYT** says the mothers' motivation is common and thinks it is linked with greater disposable income.

He says he has noticed more mothers who have finished having babies deciding to have cosmetic surgery because it is financially attainable.

Dr Flynn says the biggest difference he sees when dealing with mothers has to do with being more realistic about what can be achieved through surgery.

He says younger women in their 20s tended to approach cosmetic surgery like 'going to a store and buying a new dress' whereas women in their 30s or 40s had more knowledge about what was actually achievable.

There are no Australian statistics for how many cosmetic surgery procedures are performed and the age of patients, with the best facts coming from the US.

Dr Layt says Australian cosmetic surgery trends closely follow American figures which show no increase in teenage patients.