Several factors make some individuals better candidates for a procedure than others, including health, expectations, time and money. Of course, matching the problem to the correct procedure will weigh in, but, overall, whether you’re thinking fillers or facelift, there are some general guidelines that will increase your chances for a positive outcome.

**Fitness first**
First, your general health must be good, says Joseph Niamtu, III, D.M.D., a cosmetic facial surgeon in Richmond, Va.

*Candidate continues page 8*
There is no such thing as a required cosmetic surgery. A patient is not going to die if they don’t have a procedure,” Dr. Niamtu tells ITK.

However, he says, you may have a significant risk of complications during and after a procedure if you are severely overweight, smoke or have other serious health conditions.

Therefore, it’s important to be upfront with your doctor about any health problems you may have, so together, you can work out the most effective treatment plan.

Grounded expectations
According to Dr. Niamtu, bringing in pictures of celebrity body parts, like Angelina Jolie’s lips or J-lo’s hind side, won’t make a positive impression on your doctor.

You need to be honest with yourself about what you’re looking to improve and why. Your doctor should help you to better understand what you can expect from a given procedure. But, Dr. Niamtu advises, “You can’t quantify a cosmetic result.”

An ideal patient is one who says “they just want to look the best they can for their age — that’s realistic,” he says.

Time flex required
You can’t expect to immediately be back at work and fully functioning the day after a procedure, so you’ve got to factor downtime into the equation — and the amount of time needed for recovery depends on the procedure.

“The media hypes noninvasive procedures to the point that people have unrealistic expectations,” Dr. Niamtu warns, so be wary of promises of new procedures and treatments that sound too good to be true.

Show me the money
And just how much is it all going to cost?

Because cosmetic surgery can be expensive, Dr. Niamtu says you should make sure “you have the financial means to go through with a procedure without causing undue stress.”

Cosmetic procedures are generally considered “unnecessary,” so you have time to get your finances in order — whether you are able to pay cash or need to explore financing options. You may be able to look at smaller procedures over a period of time, instead of one larger procedure, Dr. Niamtu points out.

When patients with limited financial resources come to Dr. Niamtu seeking large or multiple procedures, he asks, “What bothers you the most?” Once clarified, you can work from there with your doctor to determine the most effective procedure for the amount of money you are able to spend.

Plan B
If you don’t meet these guidelines, however, all is not lost. Your doctor may suggest some lifestyle changes to improve how you look and feel.

And, in some cases, smaller procedures may be a consideration if your health is an issue.

According to Dr. Niamtu, “You look at plan B. If a patient has time and money, and they need a comprehensive facelift, but they’ve had a heart attack, maybe I’ll suggest a mini lift or a filler.”

Alternatively, if recovery time is your biggest obstacle, Dr. Niamtu again suggests considering a less-invasive procedure, such as a mini lift, a light laser, cheek implants or fillers.

“There’s usually something for everyone,” Dr. Niamtu says.

Do your research
So, where should you begin your hunt for more information? Dr. Niamtu says that although you may find information on the Web, you have to be discretionary in your research.

“There is information and there is misinformation,” he says, “What’s hard is knowing what’s accurate. It’s not that different from any other big purchase. Get as much information as you can.”

The outcome can be great if you’re prepared, informed and willing to allow the appropriate time for healing.
While cosmetic procedures may enhance your self-esteem, they won't fundamentally change your life. So, if you're thinking that a nose job might increase your chances for a promotion, you may want to reconsider your motivations.

There are several factors that make some individuals better candidates for a procedure than others. Of course matching the problem to the correct procedure will weigh in, but, overall, whether you're thinking fillers or facelift, there are some general guidelines that will increase your chances for a positive outcome.

Health
Before considering cosmetic surgery, your general health must be good, says Joseph Niamtu, III, D.M.D., a cosmetic facial surgeon in Richmond, Va.

“There is no such thing as a required cosmetic surgery. A patient is not going to die if they don't have a procedure,” Dr. Niamtu says. However, you may have a significant risk of complications during and after a procedure if you are severely overweight, smoke or have other serious health conditions.

Be upfront with your doctor about any health problems you might have, so together, you can work out the most effective treatment plan.

Expectations
Be realistic in your expectations. According to Dr. Niamtu, bringing in pictures of celebrity body parts — such as Angelina Jolie's lips or J-lo's buttocks — won't win you a doctor eager to work with you.

You need to be honest with yourself about what you're looking to improve and why. Your doctor will educate you about what you can expect from a given procedure, but, Dr. Niamtu says, “You can't quantify a cosmetic result.”

An ideal patient is one who says “they just want to look the best they can for their age, that's realistic,” he says.

Time
You have to have the ability to take time off for recovery — whatever time that might be. You can't expect to immediately return to work and function fully the next day.

Allowing adequate recovery time is paramount. Just as important as what procedure you're looking at is how much time you have to heal from that procedure. So if you're considering a facelift, but don't have the luxury of taking some vacation time from work, you may opt for a less invasive option that requires less downtime.

Money
Last, you must consider whether you have the discretionary income to pay for a procedure. Cosmetic surgery can be expensive.

Dr. Niamtu says you should make sure “you have the financial means to go through with a procedure without causing undue stress.”

Because cosmetic procedures aren't usually necessary, you have time to get your finances in order. Dr. Niamtu adds, you may be able to look at smaller procedures over a period of time, instead of one larger procedure. Most importantly, you need to have a clear goal in mind for what you're seeking, he says.
Dr. Niamtu says when patients with limited financial resources come seeking large or multiple procedures, he asks, “What bothers you the most?” With this clarified, you have the ability to work from there in determining, with your doctor, the most effective procedure for the amount of money you are able to spend.

Plan B

If you don’t meet these characteristics, all is not lost. Your doctor may suggest some lifestyle changes to remedy poor physical health.

Or, Dr. Niamtu says, “You look at plan B. If a patient has time, they have money, and they need a comprehensive facelift, but they have had a heart attack, maybe I’ll suggest a mini lift or a filler.”

Smaller procedures may be an alternative if there’s a health consideration.

If recovery time is your biggest obstacle, again, Dr. Niamtu would suggest considering a less invasive procedure, such as a mini lift, a light laser, cheek implants or fillers.

“There’s usually something for everyone,” Dr. Niamtu says.

Do your research

So, where should you begin your hunt for more information? Dr. Niamtu says you can find a lot of information on the Web; however, you have to be discretionary in your research.

“There is information, and there is misinformation,” he says, “What’s hard is knowing what’s accurate.”

Check your sources and make sure they’re reputable. Weed out the hype. If it sounds to good to be true, it probably is, Dr. Niamtu says.

Most importantly, talk directly with different doctors. Look for someone who is approachable, who will take the time to discuss procedures and alternatives, as well as the risks and benefits, Dr. Niamtu tells Dermatology Times. And look at their past work.

“It’s not that different from any other big purchase. Get as much information as you can,” Dr. Niamtu says.

He suggests considering these questions for yourself before you approach any doctor:

• Why are you doing this?

• What do you expect it to do for your life?

• Are you healthy and willing to accept potential complications?

“There is a downside to cosmetic surgery,” Dr. Niamtu says, “when the going gets tough … can you hang in there for the outcome?”

The outcome can be great if you’re prepared, informed and willing to allow the appropriate time for healing.

“Half of a result is patient cooperation,” Dr. Niamtu says. DT