



OPPOSITE PAGE: Michele usually consults with new patients for at least an hour to help manage expectations. ABOVE: Botox RIGHT: Waiting area spa like feel.



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## Comprehensive Cosmetic Care—Michele Cooper, MD

WRITTEN BY AMY BOUTON PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE RANDON

MANDEVILLE COSMETIC PLASTIC SURGEON, Michele Cooper, attributes many of her accomplishments in life to the people who surrounded her on her journey to achieving them. “At a young age, I aligned myself with friends who would encourage me and set examples of excellence,” she says. “They lifted me up.” In her own life, Dr. Cooper strives to do the same for her two daughters, as well as children back in Baltimore, Maryland, where she grew up, and for young people right here in the greater New Orleans area where Dr. Cooper volunteers teaching math and gymnastics, and welcomes plastic surgery residents and students interested in surgical careers to shadow her. “These activities give me the opportunity to help guide these children and young adults toward success. It sends the message that being a woman should never be thought of as a disadvantage in math, science, or a career in surgery. I want them to know they can do anything they put their minds to. I am here to give them advice on how to best navigate their education and training while avoiding some of the rough patches I had to deal with.”

With some self deprecation, Dr. Cooper jokes that she is the first generation in her family to attend college—and she acquired enough

educational degrees for the entire family. Now, she hopes to provide students from her alma mater the same opportunity through the scholarship fund she has implemented. “I went to a public high school where only a small percentage of students obtain a Bachelors degree. In my graduating class, less than one percent went on to obtain a graduate level degree such as a Masters, PhD, JD or MD. As the only physician in my graduating class of 500, I hope this scholarship will encourage more students to pursue careers in medicine.”

Within the serene, spa-like atmosphere of her office in Mandeville, she has built her full-service practice on the premise that she provides her patients with the level of service she wants as a medical consumer. She spends approximately one hour with each new patient. “This gives me ample time to really educate the patient and communicate with them, to ensure that we have a common goal that is realistic and individualized.” Because she is also married to a plastic surgeon, Dr. Scott Sullivan, Dr. Cooper has the added benefit of a built-in consulting physician. “We both have different strengths both surgically, and in our professional offices and staff. Therefore, we balance each other out in the variety and complexity of options available to the benefit of the patients.”

Dr. Cooper offers many new advances in cosmetic plastic surgery. Touted as the latest and greatest, laser liposuction or “smart lipo,” as it is known, offers less of everything as far as side effects and more of the extraordinary results patients crave. Less bleeding, less bruising, less down time and subtle tightening of the face and neck are some of its benefits. For men looking to sculpt their beach bodies, Dr. Cooper suggests “abdominal-etching.” This precision liposuction will contour his six-pack and shrink love handles as well. “Most men are back to their normal routines within 48 hours. The skin tightening and decreased recovery time affords exceptional results that are sometimes more difficult with conventional liposuction.”

The importance of choosing a qualified plastic cosmetic surgeon is not lost on Dr. Cooper. “It is important to ask the right questions like what specialty the doctor is actually certified in and by what board. An informed decision is crucial to successful results.” She notes that she has seen a recent increase in calls for help after procedures performed by unqualified surgeons have gone awry. Dr. Cooper is board-certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery, specially trained in plastic and reconstructive surgery, and she has completed a fellowship in pediatric craniofacial surgery.

“Plastic surgeons must complete over 1,000 supervised cases while in residency. We are then tested through written and oral board exams. Our residency is sanctioned by the American Board of Plastic Surgery, which means it is held to an elevated standard. Residents are required to perform a minimum number of cases in every subspecialty of cosmetic and plastic surgery before they are board-eligible.

Once the residency is completed, each surgeon must pass a written test, practice for at least one year submitting six months worth of cases before they are eligible to take the oral boards. If a resident is invited to take the oral boards (which are proctored by some of the leading plastic surgeons in the country) and they pass, they are then able to denote that they are board certified. This grueling process can take years, and thousands of hours of experience. Though there are other boards out there that sound official, they do not require such rigorous prerequisite resident training, and they are not recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS). ”

The benefits of having a highly trained and extensively qualified plastic surgeon are, of course, the obvious—the odds of getting the results you want the first time are much higher and the risk of serious complications may be lower. “It is so much easier to try and get it right the first time, rather than try and fix it after the fact,” she says. Dr. Cooper encourages every person considering cosmetic plastic surgery to make an informed decision based on qualified certifications and credentials. “What sets my practice apart is that I deliver to my patients the kind of care that I would want. When you ask the right questions, you can receive the best care possible and get the finest possible result.” ❧

Michele Cooper, MD, can be reached at 985-626-6163. Her office is located at 1090 West Causeway Approach. You can learn more about her and see other patients’ results at [www.michelecoopermd.com](http://www.michelecoopermd.com). To verify a physician’s board status, contact the American Board of Plastic Surgery at (215) 587-9322. You may also contact the American Board of Medical Specialties at 1(800) 776-2378 or [www.ABMS.org](http://www.ABMS.org).