

THE PLASTIC SURGEONS' WIVES



LIKE many wives 37-year-old former French teacher Hala Ayoubi, is proud of her husband's work. In fact she's a walking advertisement for it...

In the last 18 months she has had Botox, lip fillers, cheek fillers, a tummy tuck and liposuction, all courtesy of Dr Ayham Al-Ayoubi, 42, medical director of the London Medical and Aesthetic Clinic.

There is no law preventing Britain's estimated 600 cosmetic surgeons from operating on loved ones although the General Medical Council advises doctors and surgeons to avoid giving medical care to anyone with whom they have a close relationship. "Provided they are not solely responsible for the care of a patient after surgery then this fits within our guidelines," says a GMC spokesperson.

Hala divulges that she has had her breasts enlarged from a C-cup to a FF-cup, the only procedure not carried out by her husband.

"Ayham doesn't do the silicone implants I wanted so one of his colleagues performed that operation," explains Hala, who lives in Enfield with her husband and their children Lara, eight, and Louis, two. The couple met 18 years ago.

"Even though I've always taken great pride in my appearance and won't go to the supermarket without immaculate hair and make-up, I definitely look younger as a result of marrying a cosmetic surgeon," she says.

"Some people assume I've been having cosmetic procedures for years but my first time was summer 2008. I'd noticed fine lines on my forehead and around my eyes, asked Ayham about Botox and he agreed it would be a good idea. He also suggested fillers for my lips. I trust his judgment implicitly, not just because he's my husband but because he's a top surgeon. I feel safer having work done by him and he'd rather do it because he knows he will achieve great results."

Ayham encourages Hala to have treatment. "He once said, 'you should have your cheekbones enhanced, they would look stunning!' Far from feeling insulted, I was excited by his suggestion."

A few weeks later he injected Sculptra – a filler that stimulates the skin's collagen production – into his wife's cheeks.

"Some of my friends have had it done since seeing my results," she says. "I'm a good advert for my husband's work. People can't believe I'm 37. They tell me I look young and fresh. I don't want to be old and if I can hold back time through cosmetic surgery that's what I'll do." Once the couple decided they didn't want more children she turned her attention to improving her body.

"I'm a size 10 and I exercise every day but after having two children I was left with loose skin. A year ago my husband performed a tummy tuck and liposuction on my hips. A month later I had breast implants."

Breast augmentations are the most popular cosmetic procedure in the UK with more than 8,500 carried out last year – this is out of approximately 37,000 operations in Britain last year. Hala says: "Ayham would never pressure me to go under the knife but 'I trust him and feel safer having work done by him'."

"I wasn't married to a surgeon I'd have been ignorant of all the treatments available. I would also have been thousands of pounds worse off. I get all my treatments for free."

She still has a “long list of nip-tuck that I want to have” with a nose job top of that list but Ayham refuses. “He won’t do the operation because he doesn’t want me to look artificial. I just want to look beautiful, sexy and young for as long as I can. What woman doesn’t?”

Hala isn’t alone in being an advert for her husband’s work although Tingy Samoos, spokeswoman for the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons (BAAPS), says it’s more common to see surgeons’ wives flaunting their nip-tuck “I’ve been to the plastic surgery conferences in America and observed how the surgeons’ wives there walk around wearing their surgery like a badge of honour. It’s different here in the UK. Surgeons and their wives are much more discreet about work they’ve had done and the look here is much more natural than in the US.”

Like Hala, Edwina Viel, 30, has had her latest request for nip-tuck refused. Husband Maurizio, 49, a plastic surgeon at the London Centre for Aesthetic Surgery, has denied her post-pregnancy liposuction.

“Every mum wants a short-cut to looking slim and there have been many days I’ve wanted surgery to get rid of my post-pregnancy tummy,” says Edwina, a banker, who lives in Kensington with Maurizio and their son Luca, one. “I’d quite like breast implants too but when I made these suggestions to Maurizio last summer he reminded me that I’d only just had a baby. He wanted me to use a healthy diet and a personal trainer to get my body back in shape. He has said he’d be happy to perform surgery on me one day but I must wait until we’ve finished having a family.”

Edwina has Botox to her face and chin and admits being married to a surgeon has made her more aware of her imperfections. “I definitely scrutinise myself more because I’m so curious about the treatments that could improve my appearance.

I started having Botox two years ago when I noticed fine lines. Maurizio suggested it would be timely as it would help retrain my muscles and prevent deeper lines forming. “Until then I’d never have considered it as cosmetic procedures always sounded quite scary.

I’m open minded about it now though and constantly ask Maurizio about his procedures. I can imagine having a facelift in 30 years’ time if I need one. I don’t think there’s anything I wouldn’t have done. “Whether I have surgery one day or not, Maurizio loves me as I am and he’s a great believer that you should always do what you can to help yourself before going under the knife.”

It’s a sentiment shared by GP Dr Perna Mittal, 33, whose husband Dr Puneet Gupta, 35, practises at The Private Clinic on Harley Street.

“I can’t deny my belief that every woman should be married to a cosmetic surgeon because of all the treatments that become available to you,” says Perna, who lives in Reading with Puneet and their two-year-old daughter Rhea.

Her husband has performed laser treatment for her stomach stretch marks and put fillers in her lips. “But being a GP, I’m cautious about invasive surgery and don’t believe it would be ethical to recommend it to my patients unless there was something causing huge problems to their confidence such as a large nose or flat chest. Surgery isn’t to be taken lightly, especially not for cosmetic reasons. Then again, a friend had a facelift and I’m so impressed with the results it’s made me a little more open minded.”

Perna has always looked after her appearance. “I used to have regular facials at a beauty salon but stopped as soon as Puneet became a cosmetic doctor because I was secretly thrilled at all the procedures I might be able to have.

“Last August I had fillers injected in my lips after he told me about the procedure and how amazing the results were. Next I’m going to have a treatment to get rid of thread veins in my legs. I haven’t succumbed to Botox yet but if I feel I need it in a few years, I’ll be asking Puneet. If when she’s grown up our little girl says she wants Botox, I won’t mind. I’ve already thought that if she gets any scars we’ll just get her daddy to fix them.”