

San Francisco magazine

BEST DOCTORS 2015

PLASTIC SURGERY

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Face and body cosmetic surgery,
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OUR BEST Doctors

THE BODY
OPTIMIZED

HOW A LIST LIKE THIS GETS MADE.

NO MATTER HOW MUCH research you do, the science of determining which doctors are a region's best is an inexact one. And digging through the thousands of physicians in the Bay Area would be a Herculean task, too big for any one magazine to take on. So we did what any good patient does—we turned to a specialist: Castle Connolly Medical Ltd., a health-care research and information company that has made it its mission to guide patients to the finest physicians and hospitals in the country.

How does Castle Connolly do it? The company asks doctors to nominate their own. (And no, doctors can't nominate themselves, nor can they pay to be included.) After sifting through nearly 3,000 nominees in eight Bay Area counties—Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Sonoma—Castle Connolly's team of researchers narrowed the list of top docs down to 551 names. Each physician is cataloged in the pages that follow, along with details about their primary hospital affiliations, their specialties, and where you can find them.

Castle Connolly allows all licensed MDs and DOs (doctors with a degree in osteopathic medicine) to nominate the best among them in any specialty across the nation. The company also requests recommendations from medical professionals in the Bay Area, including hospital executives and members of county medical societies. The company's researchers screen each nominated doctor's educational and professional experience, checking for basics like a quality medical degree, faculty appointments, hospital affiliations, years of experience, and board certification, as well as malpractice suits and disciplinary action. Because so many doctors face malpractice suits, particularly in fields that have a high mortality rate, a lawsuit isn't necessarily a deal breaker. Castle Connolly's team looks into each case to ascertain if the suit was serious enough to merit disqualification. Physicians with any restriction on their license, however, are generally excluded.

The doctors who nominate their peers are required to submit their own city, state, and hospital affiliation, as well as their National Provider Identifier, to establish that they're genuine MDs or DOs. This documentation helps Castle Connolly screen contenders in two ways: One, doctors who receive a lot of out-of-state nominations clearly have a national reputation for excellence. Two, it's easy for the company to determine if the doctors in a single practice are solely nominating their coworkers. While colleagues are certainly allowed to nominate each other, the company removes from the list physicians who don't have the necessary qualifications.

If your doctors don't appear on this list, that doesn't mean that they aren't amazing physicians—it may be that they just weren't nominated this year. But if they did make the cut, it's a good indication that they're among the best physicians in the Bay Area.