

Opinion

When is enough, enough?

BY JAMIE FIRST

Society's obsession with appearance results in all kinds of craziness, so the latest vain-inspired cosmetic procedure should come as no surprise.

If you hate your feet, I have good news for you... there is a cure. The newest plastic surgery is an operation to treat a problem dubbed "toe-besity".

According to TIME magazine reporter Katy Steinmetz, "toe-besity" is "the condition of having fat or unattractive toes."

Costing anywhere from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars, many are willing to go under the knife to combat the "affliction".

Gone are the days when cosmetic surgery was restricted to bulging bums, bellies or breasts. Now, if you are self-conscious or unhappy with virtually any part of your body, a nip here or a tuck there can "fix" it.

The toe reshaping procedure is most popular in the US, with New York surgeons saying they are continually seeing an influx of people complaining about their lowest appendages.



TOE SURGERY: the newest fad, designed to combat ugly feet.

The surgery ranges from "toe tucks" (the shaving of bone and fat from the pinky), to "toe slimming" (thinning the tops of the toes where fatty deposits reside) and even "toe shortening" (reducing the size of the second

toe if it is longer than the big toe).

But is looking good in thongs really worth the pain?

Aside from the risks – namely, infection, deformity of the toe/s and the threat of recurrence

– which are enough to deter me, the idea of "slimming" your toes in the name of perfection seems more than a little nuts.

It says a lot about the age in which we are living. We have become so pre-occupied with how we look that we will stop at nothing to attain an "ideal image".

While plastic surgery is on a fast track to become the rule rather than the exception, extreme dieting is hot on its heels.

Some people have become so acutely aware of what they put into their bodies that cause them to pile on the kilos, that one Harvard University professor has created the sensation of believing you are eating chocolate, without the calories. Yes, you read that right.

Although it sounds too good to be true, it is real. Called AeroShot, it lets you experience the taste of chocolate simply by inhaling its vapours.

News.com.au's Alison Stephenson says "using a small lipstick-sized tube, consumers draw fine particles of chocolate into their mouths to experience the taste of pure chocolate [but] 're-imagined'".

Costing only a few dollars, it comes in three flavours – plain chocolate, mint chocolate and cherry chocolate – and is designed to curb cravings.

The (what some would call) "genius" behind this guilt-free dessert, biomechanical engineer David Edwards, says the product works because the particles are small enough to enter the mouth, but too large to go beyond it.

It makes you wonder whether inhalable eating could eventually take the place of some meals as a means of controlling weight.

But where is the fun in life anymore? Everything is so tightly controlled and regulated. The simple fact of the matter is what makes human beings so interesting is variation and diversity.

Journalist and novelist Anna Quindlen said "the thing that is really hard and really amazing, is giving up on being perfect and beginning the work of becoming yourself." Now there is an ideal that seems far healthier to me than all the other nonsense.

So, here is to normality in all its divergent and creative forms.

The app we love to hate

BY ASHLEIGH BUTTERSS

If you are one of the few who haven't heard about Instagram, let me break it down for you. It's basically Twitter, but with photos.

The app has become incredibly popular in a short space of time and has even broken records – passing ten million users in under a year.

Such success can be attributed to its ability to satisfy our need-it-now tendencies through its photo-sharing immediacy.

While the concept of the app is fresh and exciting, the unoriginal execution adopted by its users is depressing.

The old heroes of photography such as Robert Capa and John Gutmann would be rolling in their graves if they knew that with the click of a button, even the most inexperienced can become photographic connoisseurs.

As photographer Olivier Du Tre said, Instagram "allows every individual to turn his/her uncreative and bad-framed shots into shots as if made by a creative genius".

RMIT property student Louise Nixon thinks people use Instagram for the wrong reasons.

"It's indie-gram and it's lame. I don't want to see what people are eating."

Of course not everyone is a hater. Many fans of the app argue it's a creative outlet which allows you to take a picture that would otherwise be mundane and turn it into something interesting.

RMIT PR student Hannah Pownall thinks the app is accessible and innovative.

"Instagram is like a new age fusion of a personal style blog and communication channel, where everyone is their own photographer, editor, subject and model."

"In a world where words are meaning less and less, Instagram allows us to express ourselves visually," Ms Pownall said.

Instagram caused a stir when Facebook offered to buy the company for \$1 billion. The offer was Facebook's largest purchase to date.

So why has Instagram managed to eclipse its competitors?

One of the unique aspects of the

app is its ability to expose the most intimate moments of a stranger's life.

As creator of 1197, a company dedicated to iPhone photography, Jessica Zollman said "Instagram can be a window to places and things you don't normally get to see."

Another reason for Instagram's success is due to its multi-platform sharing option.

The app makes it easy to not only post your picture onto your Instagram page, but also onto Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and more.

With over 100 million photos circulating on Instagram in any one day, is this site purely a medium for creativity or has it just become a means for users to try and outdo each other?

Monash marketing student Sharna Rhys-Jones said the app provides another way to connect with people.

"It's helpful from a consumer perspective, as I follow shops and they regularly put up their new arrivals," she said.

So perhaps there is more to Instagram than simply sharing what you had for breakfast.



INSTAGRAM: making food last forever.

Your say: Would you wear a helmet if it wasn't mandatory?



"No. I find having to carry them around an inconvenience."
Campbell Butterss, 28, social media manager



"Yes, I would. A friend of mine had an accident and his helmet saved his life."
Jessica Young, 25, administration coordinator



"No. I think it takes away the feeling of being free."
Josh Homan, 29, construction worker



"Nah, I don't ride on the roads anyway."
Brooke Filke, 24, psychologist



"Yeah, I would. Especially riding on the road."
Ben Gadsden, 29, IT manager