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It's important to do your research if you're thinking about having cosmetic surgery abroad.

It can cost less than in the UK, but you need to weigh up potential savings against the potential risks. Safety standards may not be as high.

## SAFETY OF SURGERY ABROAD

No surgery is risk-free. Complications can happen after surgery in the UK or abroad.

If you have complications after an operation in the UK, it's the surgeon's responsibility to provide follow-up treatment.

Overseas clinics may not provide follow-up treatment, or they may not provide it to the same standard as in the UK.

Also, they may not have a healthcare professional in the UK you can go to if you have any problems.

## HOLIDAY PACKAGES INCLUDING COSMETIC SURGERY

Be cautious of websites selling cosmetic surgery as part of a holiday.

If you're looking at holiday packages:

* make sure you have a consultation with the surgeon (avoid meetings only with sales people)
* do not pay for a hospital you have never seen
* do not pay to see a surgeon you have not met

While it's possible to have a holiday before surgery, it's unrealistic to have one straight after as this can increase the risk of things going wrong.

You need to rest. You should not drink alcohol, lie in the sun, go sightseeing or go in the water.

## COSMETIC SURGERY AFTERCARE

Aftercare is an important part of treatment. You need to think about where check-ups will take place.

When you make enquiries about your treatment, find out:

* what happens if there are complications
* where follow-up appointments will be – please note it is not the responsibility of your UK GP to provide follow up care.
* what happens if you need more surgery after the original procedure – how easily can you travel back to the destination where you had the surgery?
* how much it will cost

## HOW TO REDUCE THE RISKS OF SURGERY ABROAD

Much of the advice for people thinking about surgery is the same whether they're treated in the UK or abroad.

Find out as much as you can about the procedure.

This includes:

* consultations
* the procedure
* risks and complications
* aftercare

It might be helpful to read [Is cosmetic surgery right for me?](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cosmetic-procedures/advice/cosmetic-procedure-right-for-me/) to find out more.

### CHOOSING THE RIGHT COSMETIC SURGEON

Standards and qualifications abroad might be different from the UK.

It can be difficult to find out if a surgeon is fully trained in the procedure you want.

Find out:

* how surgeons and clinics are regulated in your chosen country
* how standards are enforced

Ask the surgeon:

* what training and qualifications they have
* what organisations they belong to
* how long they have been practising
* how many procedures like the one you're having they have done
* if they speak a language you understand – they need to be able to explain the procedure to you and understand your concerns or questions

### BOOK A CONSULTATION

You should have 2 consultations with the surgeon treating you before any surgery.

This will give you a cooling-off period, which is normally 2 weeks in the UK.

The surgeon should make sure you understand:

* what the procedure involves
* the limitations of a procedure
* what alternative procedures there are
* any risks or complications

They should be able to show before and after pictures of their work.

### THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU NEED TO DO IF THINGS GO WRONG

Make sure you check:

* what insurance the clinic or surgeon has and if it will cover you
* what your travel insurance covers (it does not normally cover if things go wrong in surgery)
* how you'll get home in the case of an emergency and how much it will cost

### PLAN WHEN YOU FLY HOME

You'll need to rest after any surgery.

Air travel and major surgery increase your risk of a blood clot, which can be life threatening.

It's recommended you do not fly for:

* 5 to 7 days after procedures such as breast surgery and liposuction
* 7 to 10 days after facial cosmetic procedures or tummy tucks

**PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET – BARIATRIC SURGERY**

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