

## **Guidelines for cosmetic surgery abroad**

Before surgery a proper consultation is absolutely necessary. In an ideal setting this should happen already in a clinic in the UK with the surgeon who will also operate. This gives the patient time to think about the procedure.

If you feel more comfortable bring a companion with you.

Is the trip well planned, will somebody pick you up from the airport and bring you to the hotel or hospital?

Make sure that the stay abroad is long enough to recover from the procedure before you travel home. Avoid travelling for about one week after major procedures like tummy tucks. Smaller procedures like eyelid tucks, liposuction or breast enlargement can be done on shorter trips (e.g. weekend trips)

Long-Haul flights prior to Surgery or too soon after surgery increase the risk of developing blood clots

Check on the surgeons qualification. Only a board certified Plastic Surgeon has completed a several years training program and are trained in Plastic and aesthetic procedures involving the entire body surface. The term cosmetic surgeon is not protected and can easily be misused. Some of the abroad surgeons, especially when they offer clinics in the UK, are registered with the GMC. As Plastic Surgeons they will be registered on the GMC specialist register what will ensure you furthermore of their qualifications. Furthermore the surgeon should be member in one of the national or international recognized Plastic Surgery Associations.

A major concern while travelling abroad for cosmetic surgery is aftercare. However, there would be little difference between a patient living in the North of Scotland who decides to go to London for surgery or a patient living in the UK who decides to go to another country, 1-2 hours flight from the UK. In both cases, the surgeon will be far from the patient's home if a problem arises. This is certainly different for more distant destinations.

In the best scenario a good aftercare should be organized within the UK. A nurse and a surgeon clinic should be in place so that the patient can have the follow up appointments in the UK. Furthermore make sure that the surgeon or staff members are reachable via phone or e-mail if the patient has any questions or concerns. In case of a necessary correction or revisional surgery the patient has to travel again. Keep this in mind if you go to far away destinations.

Make sure that there is a plan and concept in place in case complications occur.

Compare the costs. Cosmetic surgery within continental Europe might be more expensive than in Asia or South America, but don't forget to add all your travel expenses. And remember that cheap Plastic Surgery can be the most expensive of all. If you are not happy with the result it can cost a small fortune to put things right again.

What is the medical standard in the country you wish to go?

Does your surgeon and the staff speak English? Is there a language barrier?

One important thing to consider is the legal situation. Within the EU patients are protected by the same European law with the same patient rights like the UK. Make sure that surgeons are

covered by appropriate malpractice insurance. These aspects can be different in countries outside the EU.