

Should you travel abroad for cosmetic surgery?

If you're considering cosmetic surgery but are put off by the price tag, you may want to consider having plastic surgery abroad with a board-certified plastic surgeon. [Medical tourism](#) offers many advantages for both patients and practitioners: doctors can expand their patient network globally, and patients can afford to combine their dream of plastic surgery with a nice holiday getaway.

The benefit of having plastic surgery abroad must be weighed against the potential risks. Benefits include, obviously, a savings in cost. While this is a major factor in your decision, your biggest consideration will be finding the right surgeon with the right experience, qualifications and credentials to give you the best results and keep you safe on the operating table – and afterwards during your recovery.

Discretion is another benefit of going off to have plastic surgery on vacation; this is by far the easiest way to ensure that no one will know (if that's important to you). Maybe you're seeking a specialized procedure that is best performed by plastic surgeons trained in a specific country. Whatever you're looking for, your health and safety should always be the first priority. Without first doing extensive research into the process of having surgery abroad, you risk making a choice that could mean lower standards of safety and training (which means poor results), greater risk of liability, or hidden costs.

Where to go?

The top destinations for plastic surgery span six continents and include Brazil, Canada, China, Costa Rica, India, Iran, Malaysia, Mexico, Poland, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, the U.S. and Venezuela. South Korea is the number-one plastic surgery destination in the world, taking nearly a quarter of the global plastic surgery market share. South Korea was also an early adopter of electronic health records, making the bureaucratic details of international medical travel (admission and discharge, insurance, visas, etc.) much more painless. The government is supporting efforts to attract half a million medical tourists by the end of next year.

Who to go to?

Of course, top-quality aesthetic plastic surgeons practice all over the world, but as you may well know, many doctors offer cosmetic surgery (not just plastic surgeons) which is why it is critical you understand your specific level of aesthetic training and expertise and commitment to patient safety. ISAPS Board-certified plastic surgeons undergo the most rigorous and extensive level of aesthetic surgical training of any medical specialty. Contrast this with, for example a gynecologist who has a valid medical license and takes a few training courses on perhaps tummy-tucks or breast augmentations and decides to open up a cosmetic surgery practice. Under most countries' laws this scenario is both legal and common – but the outcomes can be vastly different. Placing yourself in the hands of a board-certified aesthetic plastic surgeon means your doctor has received the very highest level of training and accreditation afforded by the specialty and they offer you a commitment to best aesthetic practices and patient care that aren't provided by any other medical specialty who decides to practice in the aesthetic field.

So to get started in choosing your surgeon, ISAPS offers the most comprehensive guide to helping you [plan your medical travel](#) anywhere in the world.

- Start with our ISAPS [list of member surgeons](#), which you can use to research specific doctors. Find out what each surgeon's training and background is, where they went to medical school and did their residency, whether he or she holds professional certification, memberships, etc.
- In addition to knowing the basic facts about your surgeon, you should do everything you can to establish a doctor-patient relationship ahead of time. Whenever possible, try to meet the surgeon, visit the practice and inspect the facility before you proceed.
- A solid doctor-patient relationship must include discussing the sensitive subject of [safety](#), as well as developing a plan in case something goes wrong during the surgery or you are not satisfied with the results. Who will pay for revision surgery (if needed)? What sort of insurance does the practice have against liability or negligence? What are the local laws governing malpractice? What are the credentials and training of other staff with whom you will interact? A skilled surgeon will be glad to answer all your question without personal offense. If you feel reluctant to talk about this with one surgeon, you may want to find one with whom you feel more comfortable.
- Risks of postsurgery complications can be increased by long flights and travel after surgery. Make sure you discuss these risks with your doctor in advance of any travel. The ISAPS website also provides a guide to [recovery, aftercare and complications](#).

The ISAPS website provides all the resources you need to find the right aesthetic plastic surgeon for the procedure(s) you want. Since clear communication is essential to a successful surgery, these resources are offered in ten languages (English, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, French, Russian, Arabic, Chinese and Japanese). Wherever you are and wherever you go, the confidence of knowing that the ISAPS surgeon you choose is committed to the highest standards of quality and safety.