

CUT AWAY

Going overseas for cosmetic surgery?
Plastic and reconstructive surgeon
James Savundra has concerns...

Promoted as a way to have cheap surgery and a holiday at the same time, many companies in Asia that are happy to combine a breast augmentation or face lift with a post-op stay at a five-star resort. It sounds too good to be true – and it usually is! Some of the worst complications I have seen have been in patients who have gone overseas for surgery.

Is it cheaper to go overseas for cosmetic surgery?

The costs seem lower, but you may be surprised to learn the difference. Get a quote from at least two or three plastic surgeons in Perth first, and compare the total, including surgeon's, anaesthetist's and hospital fees. Sometimes there will be other costs, such as synthetic implants. Also factor in the cost of having a partner or family member travel with you to take care of you after the operation.

If I travel overseas for cosmetic surgery, will it be performed by a fully qualified plastic surgeon?

In Asia, the term 'plastic surgeon' may be used by someone who is not a plastic surgeon. In Australia, a plastic surgeon will have 'FRACS' (Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons) after their name and Members of the Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) are fully qualified.

Can I fly after cosmetic surgery? Not for at least two – ideally six – weeks. Most cosmetic surgery tourism companies will usually offer a one-week stay in the country where surgery is performed.

Should my plastic surgeon be easily contactable in the post-operative period? Always. And this may not be the case with an overseas company.

Is the medical tourism industry regulated? No. If you wish to complain about overseas surgery, it is unlikely there will be an organisation to support you.

Can I have a pleasurable holiday after cosmetic surgery? No. All surgery requires a recovery period, best spent at home with family helping you recover.

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