



Considering a cosmetic procedure?

Choosing to have a cosmetic procedure is a positive step if it is taken after careful thought and consideration. It is worth considering why you feel you may benefit from a cosmetic procedure. For example:

- Do you expect it to change your life as well as your appearance, and how do you think your life will improve?
- Is it reasonable or likely that a change in your appearance will radically change your life?
- Are you considering the procedure for yourself or to please someone else?
- Do you think that having the procedure will improve your relationship or employment prospects?
- Is it reasonable to expect that the procedure will give you the appearance that you want?

If you feel your concerns about your appearance result from anxieties about social situations or from problems with relationships, you might want to discuss with your GP or another professional the possibility of seeing a counsellor or psychologist. They may be able to help you to address your concerns in other effective ways.

Gathering information


If you do feel that you could benefit from a cosmetic procedure, then it is vital to ensure that you are as well informed as possible. The next step is to gather information about the procedure you are interested in and the hospitals or clinics who offer this procedure. However, you should note that it is not advisable to undergo any cosmetic procedure if you are pregnant or if you have certain medical conditions, or if you are taking certain medications.

You may be nervous about asking for information, but hospitals and clinics will do everything they can to put you at your ease and will make sure that you get the information you need. You may find it helpful to write all your questions down so you don't forget anything. Or you may prefer to attend consultations with your partner, or a relative or friend, who can remind you to ask for information if you forget.

If you have special needs – for example, if your first language is not English or you have a sensory impairment (e.g. hearing or sight), then make sure that providers are able to supply information in a way that you can understand.

Talking to your doctor

It's a good idea to talk to your GP if you're considering a cosmetic procedure. He or she will be able to give you general advice and advise you of any particular health issues you should mention to your cosmetic clinician.



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Talking to your cosmetic clinician

When you first approach cosmetic service providers you may meet or speak to a patient adviser. You should receive advice about surgery only from doctors and nurses, as they have the qualifications and expertise to give you high-quality advice. Check whether your adviser is a doctor or nurse, and whether they are registered with a relevant professional organisation (e.g. Cosmetic Physicians Society of Australasia (CPSA)).

It is important to be honest when you meet the cosmetic clinician. Being clear about your expectations of the procedure will make sure that they can give you the correct advice about whether the procedure will achieve the results you want. Be truthful about any health or lifestyle issues that the clinician may ask you about, as these could affect the results of your procedure. It is essential that you should tell the clinician if you have any existing allergies, medical conditions or are taking any medications.

Make sure that you feel confident about the clinician's ability to perform the procedure. Ask him or her about the qualifications they hold, how many procedures they have carried out, and how many patients needed a corrective procedure. Asking for "before" and "after" photographs of other patients who have had your chosen procedure will also give you information about the surgeon's work.

The clinician should provide full details of the procedure itself, including what will happen, how long it will take, the type of anaesthesia that will be used, the level of pain you may experience, how long the results of the procedure will last, whether there will be any scars and any risks the procedure may carry. All procedures contain a certain element of risk and your clinician should provide a full explanation of the general risks of surgery and any particular risks associated with your procedure.

The clinician should also talk to you about any preparation you need to follow before and after the procedure. As the success of your procedure may depend on following this advice, make sure that you understand it fully and are prepared and able to follow it. Your clinician should give you written information to take away with you after the consultation so that you can refer back to it if you need to.