

## Cosmetic Surgery Checklist

Thank you for visiting the Pure Aesthetics website.

Successful cosmetic plastic surgery is about making the correct choices for yourself. At Pure Aesthetics, we treat each patient individually, and help guide you to make these personal and important decisions.

This cosmetic surgery checklist is a guideline to finding a safe and reputable surgeon. If you have any questions, please contact our staff in Sydney on (02) 9252 9262.

### 1 Finding a Surgeon

Family & Friends	Word of mouth is a good place to start. Talk to family or friends who have had similar cosmetic surgery procedures, and find out about their experience with that surgeon.
General Practitioner &/or Specialists	Your family doctor or other specialist can give you a referral to one or more surgeons. Ask if they have previously referred a patient to this surgeon and whether they obtained any positive feedback.
Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS)	<p>RACS is the only Government recognised and accredited training facility for all specialist surgeons in Australia and New Zealand. It covers specialties such as General, Cardiac, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedic, and Plastic.</p> <p>At the completion of the RACS training, which is a minimum of 8 years on top of their medical degree, the doctor achieves the qualification award – FRACS (Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons).</p> <p><b>A plastic surgeon is a recognised specialist surgeon who has successfully completed the intensive training program of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) in plastic surgery.</b></p> <p>There is no "College" other than the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons which is accredited by the Government to provide specialist surgical training in Australia.</p> <p>For a list of fellows, please call RACS: Within Australia: (03) 9249 1200 International: +613 9249 1200 Website: <a href="http://www.surgeons.org">www.surgeons.org</a></p>
Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS)	<p><b>ASPS are the only governing body representing fully qualified plastic surgeons in Australia. All members are fully qualified in both reconstructive and cosmetic surgery.</b></p> <p>Only qualified plastic surgeons (FRACS) can become a member of the Australian Society of</p>

	<p>Plastic Surgeons (ASPS).</p> <p>In Australia, many doctors who describe themselves as “cosmetic surgeons” are not plastic surgeons. Many of these doctors are not surgically trained with the RACS. Groups such as the “Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery (ACCS)” have no Government recognition. We recommend you check credentials and be aware of this marketing hype, as many members are not specialist surgeons.</p> <p>For a list of qualified plastic surgeons, please call ASPS: Within Australia: 1300 134 111 International: +612 9437 9200 Website: <a href="http://www.plasticsurgery.org.au">www.plasticsurgery.org.au</a></p>
Phone Directory	<p>You can search for surgeons in the phone directory; however this source is non-discriminative of specialists. Make sure that the surgeon has FRACS after their name.</p> <p>Yellow Pages™ are the most comprehensive phone directory in Australia. You can search for a surgeon in these categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Medical Practitioners</li> <li>- Cosmetic Surgery &amp;/or Procedures</li> <li>- Medical Practitioners – Specialty Guide (Plastic &amp; Reconstructive Surgery)</li> </ul> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.yellowpages.com.au">www.yellowpages.com.au</a></p>
Internet Search	<p>Internet search directories such as Google™, Yahoo™ and MSN™ are a good source of information and most plastic surgeons will have their own website.</p> <p>Use keywords to find a plastic surgeon in your choice of location. If using Google™, don't just look at the top coloured box or the right-hand column (known as sponsored links). These areas represent paid advertising, so the first listing is not necessarily the best choice for you. All other listings are ranked chronologically by Google™ based on the relevance to your keywords.</p> <p>Look at several websites and filter through the information which is most relevant to you.</p> <p>You may wish to contact the plastic surgeries directly by phone or email. Some websites even have an online website enquiry form, which helps if you want to remain discreet. Please note that complicated questions can only be answered in a formal consultation with the surgeon.</p>

## 2 Your Initial Consultation

Once you have selected your surgeon, you should book an appointment for an initial consultation. It is important to be on time for your appointment, as you don't want to feel rushed. Please bring a referral from your general practitioner.

Make sure the consultation is with the surgeon performing the procedure – not a nurse or sales person.

The surgeon will ask you questions about your medical history and your expectations of surgery. Be honest with yourself if you want to ensure a safe and successful surgical outcome.

The surgeon will explain the procedure in detail including options, surgical methods, realistic expectations, recovery times, and potential risks and complications. An examination will be conducted and the surgeon will offer you his recommendations. Ask him if you are a good candidate for the procedure you are considering.

Ask to see before and after photos of previous patients. The photos should be in an original format without any modifications. Before and after photos can be a convincing statement, but be sure to ask if they represent typical results.

Prepare a list of questions and take notes of their responses. It is quite likely that you will walk out of the consultation forgetting some of the answers. If you don't understand the answer, ask the surgeon to explain. The surgeon should speak in a way that you understand.

The surgeon should provide an information pack for you to take home. This should only contain literature related to your surgery, which is informative and not flashy.

Don't feel pressured into going ahead with surgery immediately. Cosmetic surgery is not an emergency.

Trust your instincts and decline surgery with doctors who state that they are the only pioneer of that procedure, or that they have never had any problems or complications.

After your consultation, your surgeon should provide a printed quotation of the estimated fees for your surgery. In Australia, this is known as an Informed Financial Consent (IFC) and outlines the estimated fees and potential rebates for your procedure. The IFC should also include the surgeon's billing policies such as when payment is required and acceptable forms of payment.

The next section identifies what you need to know about the surgeon.

### 3 Things to Consider About the Surgeon

Training & Certification	<p><i>Is the surgeon a fully qualified plastic surgeon? Do they have the title FRACS after their name? Are they a member of the Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons?</i></p>
Experience	<p><i>What is the surgeon's experience with this procedure?</i></p> <p>Most surgeons choose to specialise in a particular type of surgery, but still have experience with many other surgical procedures. Do not look at this as a down-side.</p> <p>Some procedures may be new, and therefore their experience may be less, but you can be assured that a fully qualified plastic surgeon has sufficient surgical skills to adapt with new procedures. If they are unfamiliar with a particular type of surgery, they will often refer you to another surgeon.</p> <p><i>How many times does the surgeon perform this procedure in a year?</i></p> <p>Not all surgeons know the exact statistics and statistics may differ yearly since they first performed this procedure. Instead, ask if they perform this procedure on a regular basis.</p>
Surgical Technique	<p><i>Does the surgeon have any special techniques relating to the procedure?</i></p> <p>A fully qualified plastic surgeon has extensive knowledge of the skin's anatomy (structure) and physiology (function). You can be assured that their surgical techniques are of highest excellence.</p> <p>Some surgeons may also use different techniques to another surgeon. Ask them why they use this technique and how it will benefit you. It is important that the surgeon uses modern surgical techniques to minimise scarring.</p>
Hospitals	<p><i>Which hospitals is the plastic surgeon affiliated with?</i></p> <p>Most accredited hospitals will only allow qualified specialist surgeons to operate there. If your surgeon only offers to do the surgery in an office setting or in some day surgery facilities, you should be suspicious of their qualifications and ask why? If a complication arises, do they have hospital-admitting privileges?</p> <p>In Australia, a specialist surgeon who has clinical privileges in a hospital is considered a Visiting Medical Officer (VMO) and must have professional indemnity insurance.</p> <p>A plastic surgeon VMO at a public hospital is responsible for the medical treatment and care of both public and private patients. They regularly perform public operating lists, are on-call for emergency situations, contribute to research and quality assurance, and are involved with teaching future plastic surgeons.</p>

## 4 Your Surgical Fees

Don't be swayed by a surgeon who offers free consultations or has much cheaper or discounted fees. A good plastic surgeon knows what they are worth. It is more important to have a good result, rather than a good price.

Many practices will give you an approximate total cost for surgery; however make sure you have accounted for the following:

Initial Consultation	<p>This is the most important consultation for you and should be at least 45 minutes. Anything less is only going to make you feel rushed.</p> <p>For Australian residents, please obtain a referral from your doctor as you will be able to claim a Medicare rebate for the consultation and some procedures. From the date of your consultation with the surgeon, a referral will last for 12 months from a general practitioner and 3 months from a specialist.</p>
Subsequent Consultation	<p>This is a follow up consultation with the surgeon prior to surgery. This should be at least 30 minutes and is helpful with understanding any unanswered questions.</p> <p>For Australian residents who presented a referral at their initial consultation, you can also claim a Medicare rebate for the subsequent consultation.</p>
Surgeon	<p>Check that the surgeon's fees also include post operative fees. Most surgeons' fees will include up to 12 months.</p>
Anaesthetist	<p>In most cases, anaesthetist fees are based on an hourly rate. The hourly rate is not just based on the time it takes to perform the surgery. It is the whole theatre time including the initial sedation, the procedure, and the awakening.</p>
Assistant	<p>Some surgical procedures need to be performed in conjunction with an assistant surgeon to speed up the process and limit the time you are anaesthetized. Assistant surgeons are fully qualified doctors, and may be another colleague plastic surgeon.</p> <p>In most cases, assistant fees are based on an hourly rate.</p>
Implants / Prostheses (if any)	<p>If you are having a purely cosmetic procedure, you will have to pay for implants or prostheses.</p> <p>In Australia, an implant or prosthesis may be covered by Medicare for medical reasons. The surgeon will advise you if there is such possibility. The surgeon needs to submit a written request to Medicare and is subject to approval.</p>

Garments	Your surgeon may recommend a post operative garment to reduce swelling and improve healing. The garment is either complimentary or added onto your surgical fees.
Hospital	<p>Hospital fees will depend on several factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public or private hospital</li> <li>- Type of procedure</li> <li>- Day stay or overnight</li> <li>- Australian resident or overseas visitor</li> <li>- If covered by Medicare</li> <li>- If covered by private health insurance (and if so, there may be an excess fee or co-payment fee)</li> </ul> <p>You may need to account for extra money if other health professionals became involved in your care, your length of stay is prolonged, or tests were required.</p>
Travel	<p>If you reside outside of metropolitan Sydney, interstate, or overseas, you will have to consider the associated travel costs.</p> <p>It is important to find out the time you are required to stay in Sydney after your surgery.</p> <p>If considering having surgery in another country, make sure it is performed by a fully qualified plastic surgeon in that country and has good regulations such as in USA, Canada, France &amp; Germany. Be careful of unregistered, unhygienic or unethical places of practice.</p>
Rebates for Australian Residents	<p><i>Medicare &amp; Private Health Insurance</i></p> <p>Some procedures are considered to benefit a medical condition and will correspond with a Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) item number. This item number is listed on your surgical receipt and allows patients to claim a rebate for the surgeon's fees, anaesthetist's fees, approved implants/prostheses and some assistant fees.</p> <p>If you have private health insurance, and your procedure has an MBS item number, patients may be able to claim a further rebate. You will need to check your level of cover with your private health insurer.</p> <p>Your rebate can only be claimed after surgery. The difference between your initial fees and any rebates received are called out-of-pocket expenses.</p> <p><i>Australian Taxation Office (ATO)</i></p>

	<p>You can claim a tax offset of 20% for medical expenses over \$1500, minus any rebates received from Medicare and private health insurance.</p> <p>There is no limit to the amount you can claim. However, it does not apply to cosmetic procedures which don't attract an MBS item number.</p> <p>For more information, please call your financial advisor or the Australian Taxation Office: Within Australia: 13 28 61 Website: <a href="http://www.ato.gov.au">www.ato.gov.au</a></p>
<p>Rebates for Overseas Visitors</p>	<p>Some overseas visitors may be able to claim a rebate for their surgery from their private health insurance in their home country. You will need to check if you are eligible with your private health insurer.</p>

## 5 Going Ahead with Surgery

If you have decided to go ahead with surgery, you should book in for a second consultation. This allows you to go through any new questions you may have about the surgery, fill in hospital/doctor consent forms, and book a date of surgery.

You will be provided with pre and post operative information sheets, garments (if any), hospital information, admission times, and fasting times.

Depending on your age and health status, you may be required to obtain an ultrasound or blood test prior to surgery. Your surgeon will notify you if this is required.

If you are travelling from rural Sydney, interstate, or overseas, make sure you plan enough time to be in Sydney for your post operative visits. Ask the surgeon what is the minimum required length of stay and, if possible, add an extra 1-2 weeks to plan for unforeseen circumstances.

Some patients may decide to have a third consultation. If you require any more than this, consider if you really want to go ahead. You can also ask to speak to previous patients about their experience with the surgeon and surgery. However, please note that individual circumstances will differ.