Choosing Your Surgeon

When choosing a surgeon it is very important to gain information about the:

Qualifications of the surgeon

Ensure your surgeon is a fully qualified Plastic Surgeon with FRACS in Plastic surgery after his name. Only genuine plastic surgeons in Australia are members of the Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons or ASPS. You may ring the society to gather more information on the surgeon you wish to consult. Please visit www.plasticsurgery.org.au or ring their Information Hotline: 1300 367 446

Experience of the surgeon

How long has the surgeon been doing the procedure? How many has he or she performed? How often does he or she do the procedure? Have any complications occurred? You may request to be shown photographic examples of the surgeon's own work (pre and post-operative photographs) for the operation.

Relationship with the surgeon

You should feel comfortable with the surgeon and satisfy yourself that you have been provided with a complete and balanced explanation of the procedure has enquired about alongwith a detailed explanation of potential complications and side effects. At the end of the consultation you should feel happy that your surgeon will look after your best interests.

Aftercare

You need to make sure that your surgeon will organise proper care for you, after you have had the operation. What if you have questions or concerns? What if there is a problem after surgery? Will you be able to access the surgeon or his staff readily? Will the surgeon himself speak to you and offer advice and solutions? How many times will the surgeon see you after surgery? Are your follow-up visits are included in your surgical fee?

Reputation

This can be through word of mouth (from friends and associates) or from your general practitioner. Your general practitioner will usually be aware of the reputation of particular surgeons in your area.

Difference between a Cosmetic Surgeon and a Plastic Surgeon?

All Members of the Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons are distinguished by these unique attributes:

Many health care providers are now performing cosmetic procedures, but that doesn't mean they are all qualified to perform plastic surgery. ASPS Member Surgeons are trained in plastic surgery which encompasses both cosmetic and reconstructive procedures.

Members of the Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons

Are Fellows of The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS). The Fellowship of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (FRACS) is an award, fully accredited by the Australian Medical Council which is the only body authorised by the Commonwealth Government to certify all medical training.

The only cosmetic plastic surgery specialists recognised as specialists in this discipline by Medicare Australia

Have completed all the Surgical Education and Training requirements in the specialty of plastic surgery, which takes at least 7 years after medical school graduation.

Operate only in accredited medical facilities.

Adhere to a strict code of ethics.

Fulfil continuing professional development requirements, including standards and innovations in patient safety.

Participate in volunteer plastic surgery organisation such as Interplast and Operation Smile which provide plastic surgery to more than 20 countries in need.

To make sure your surgeon has these outstanding qualifications, look for the ASPS Member Surgeon symbol.

Medicare Australia recognises all ASPS members as specialist plastic surgeons.

Many health care providers are now performing cosmetic procedures, but that doesn't mean they're all qualified to perform plastic surgery. Cosmetic surgeons are usually registered General Practitioners, some of whom do not undertake the same medical training as plastic surgeons. Some cosmetic surgeons are fellows of the Australian College of Cosmetic Surgeons (FACCS), who recommend that members of their Faculty of Surgery complete three years of general surgical training plus two years of cosmetic surgery training, after becoming a doctor.

However none of the ACCS's qualifications or examinations are currently recognised by the official credentialing body, the Australian Medical Council and they therefore have no official status. This means that many cosmetic surgeons find it difficult to obtain operating privileges in private hospitals and licensed day surgeries.

Verify the medical credentials of your surgeon.