

## Useful Information

You will find below some of the frequently asked questions prior to surgery and at consultation. If you have any other questions, or would like to schedule an appointment, we would love to hear from you.

### **Q: Is Plastic Surgery safe?**

A: All surgical procedures are accompanied by a certain degree of risk, whether the procedures are for medical or cosmetic reasons. We are dedicated to making your operation go smoothly. We carefully review your medical history and current health condition before deciding if it is safe for you to proceed with surgery. It is important that you fully disclose all important information so that we are able to make an accurate assessment of the risks involved. We will take every precaution necessary to reduce the possibility of any complications.

### **Q: How do you know if Surgery is right for you?**

A: There are several important factors that come into play when deciding whether plastic surgery is the right option for you. One of the most important factors is your health. Being in good health greatly reduces the risk of complications occurring during surgery and leads to a speedy recovery. Next, you need to ask yourself what your motivations are. People who have plastic surgery generally find that the surgery enhances their overall appearance and self-esteem. Thirdly, you should have realistic expectations. Plastic surgery is both a science and an art, neither of which are perfect. Set reasonable goals as to the result you wish to achieve and be prepared to thoroughly discuss these goals during your initial consultation.

### **Q: Can you have several procedures performed simultaneously?**

A: It is a relatively common practice for a plastic surgeon to perform multiple procedures during one operation. This allows the surgeon to better “sculpt” your final appearance. In addition, having several procedures done simultaneously saves you the expense of paying the operating room and anesthesia costs more than once. However, having too much done at one time can lead to complications. The decision to have multiple procedures done depends on which procedures are being done, the extent of surgery, the operating time, and your age/health. Ultimately, the surgeon decides whether or not it is appropriate to include more than one procedure in your operation.

### **Q: What happens during your initial consultation?**

A: During your first visit and consultation we will discuss your desired changes and expectations, review your medical history and current health, and make an assessment on whether the procedure(s) in question are right for you. This will include information about any medical conditions, drug allergies, medical treatments you have received, previous operations and medications that you currently take. It is important for you to provide complete information.

The medical conditions that may increase risks of surgery include high blood pressure, heart disease, thyroid problems, diabetes and bleeding problems. Medications that may affect your suitability for surgery include Warfarin, Aspirin, Clopidogril (Plavix), Nurofen, Voltaren and others.

Please feel free to bring a friend or spouse with you if you like. Photographs will be taken to allow for planning of the surgery and to assess results following your surgery. These will be kept strictly confidential between Dr Gahankari and his staff. This is a good time to ask specific questions about the procedure so that you are fully prepared, mentally and emotionally, for surgery. We will discuss the results that can be achieved, with the aid of photos and/or computer imaging. Modern surgery is typically safe but, despite highest standards of surgical practice, there are always potential risks and complications. These will be discussed during your consultation. When a final decision is made, you will need to sign an informed consent stating that you are fully aware and understand what is entailed by your pending operation, including the potential complications and secondary effects.

A referral from your GP is preferred as this provides us with your medical history. Some procedures are eligible for rebates, and your consultation may be partly rebatable from Medicare if you have a referral from your GP.

Dr Gahankari and his staff are available at all times to discuss any issues or to clarify any questions you may have. To ensure a successful outcome, we encourage patients to be well informed before making a decision to go ahead with surgery. We believe in helping you make the right choices without placing you under pressure to make these important decisions.

### **Q: What should you bring to your first appointment?**

A: You need to bring...

- A referral letter from a GP.
- Medicare Card or Number.
- Private Health Insurance details or Card.
- Workers Compensation Claim Number.
- Any x-rays, scans or test results.
- A list of your allergies and medications if not provided by your G.P.
- Address details of your referring doctor.
- Address details of any other doctors or physiotherapists that you would like to be kept informed about your consultation.

### **Q: How long will it take to recover from my surgery?**

A: Generally, post-operative instructions call for rest and limited movement in order to speed up the healing process and recovery time. The length of recovery varies with each procedure and is different for each individual. Bruises usually disappear within a few days, and most swelling is gone in a matter of weeks. If you follow our post-operative instructions carefully, you will be able to enjoy your normal activities within no time. Your scars will fade over time but are permanent. We take care to conceal any scars so that they are barely visible, if at all. The image-enhancing effects of plastic surgery become more evident over time with certain procedures taking up to a year for your body to fully adjust and settle into its new look. When you come in for your consultation we can discuss your expected recovery period and any post-operative instructions in detail.

### **Q: What are the costs involved?**

A: If you need an operation, Dr Gahankari's staff will be able to provide you with a cost estimate for your surgery.

Dr. Gahankari's standard fee is based around the Australian Medical Association recommended fee. This means that in most instances, there will be a portion of your surgical fee which will not be covered by Medicare or your Health Fund. It is important that you ask about this gap prior to receiving your treatment.

Please note, that the coverage for various operations varies greatly depending on the Private Health fund involved. For most operations done in a Private Hospital, or as a Private Patient in a public hospital, there is a fee for...

- Doctor's Fee
- The Assistant
- The Anaesthetist
- The Hospital

And there may be a need for visits to the Physiotherapist for casts, splints or therapy.

Our reception staff members will be more than happy to help you through what is often at times a confusing area.

### **Q: Do you need to have Private Health Insurance?**

A: No. You have the following options...

You can choose to 'self insure'. This still allows you to choose your doctor and the location and timing of your surgery, but will result in a higher out of pocket payment than if you were in a Health Fund. It is particularly important to note that operating theatre and prostheses costs can be high as Medicare does not cover this at all in a Private Hospital.

We will provide you with a quotation for the medical expenses of your procedure and discuss the quotation with you in detail before your procedure, so that you have a full understanding of the costs involved. You will be liable for any costs not covered by Medicare or your health fund – otherwise known as Out-Of-Pocket Expenses. We assist patients with obtaining estimate hospital fees from the hospitals we use. It is your responsibility to confirm your level of cover with your health insurance fund, and any associated fees such as an excess or co-payment. Also you will be provided with an estimate of the anaesthetist's fees. Unless otherwise stated in your quotation, it does not cover services provided by other doctors (such as radiologists and pathologists), or other costs associated with your stay in the hospital or day surgery unit, such as accommodation, pharmacy and physiotherapy. In the event of unforeseen circumstances, it may be necessary to arrange additional medical services, resulting in further charges to you.

### **Q: What kind of anaesthesia will be used?**

A: The type of the anaesthesia varies with each procedure. For some procedures, only local anaesthesia or local anaesthesia with intravenous (IV) sedation is needed. This method will allow you to be awake, but insensitive to any pain. In more complex procedures, general anaesthesia is needed and you will be asleep during the entire procedure. The anaesthesia used in your operation will depend on the type and extent of the procedure(s), your age, and the surgeon's preference.

The anaesthetist managing your surgery are a highly trained, experienced, and qualified specialist doctors.

You will be required to fast for at least 6 hours prior to your surgery. This includes food, water, and chewing gum. Your operation may be postponed if you eat or drink before surgery.

Modern anaesthetics are safe and effective, but do have risks. Our anaesthetist will explain these to you prior to your surgery, and feel free to contact them prior if you have any concerns.

Please inform us of any medical conditions you may have, current medications, allergies and any previous surgery.

**Q: Pre and Post recovery period**

A: Should you have any questions regarding your surgery, be sure they are answered by Dr Gahankari in advance. Well-meaning friends may not always be a good source of information. Find out everything before proceeding with the operation - a well-informed patient is a happy one.

After surgery, you will return to our clinic for follow-up care at prescribed intervals, at which time your progress can be evaluated by our highly qualified nursing staff and subsequently the surgeon. Once the immediate postoperative follow-up is complete, we encourage our patients to come back for periodic checkups to observe and discuss the long-term results of surgery.

Please remember that if you have questions or concerns during your recovery, or need additional information at a later time, you should contact us.

**Q: Do you need to stop smoking and if so, how long?**

A: For your general health and wellbeing and to improve wound healing, patients are required to stop smoking at least 6 weeks before surgery and continue this for as long as possible after surgery. If you are unable to stop smoking, please use patches or gum.

**Q: When can you drive?**

A: You must be able to move comfortably, not taking strong pain killers, and be able to see clearly. This is usually at least 3-7 days after your procedure.

**Q: When can you return to work?**

A: Depending on the procedure, the recovery times may vary. For all hospital procedures, you should not return to work on the same day. Please arrange for a friend or relative to pick you up. Minor surgery is performed as day only and you can return to work the next day. Major surgery may require up to several weeks recovery. If time away from work is required, you will be provided with a medical certificate.

**Q: How long does it take for scars to settle?**

A: Different patients heal differently to others. Scars will initially appear red, and become less pink and noticeable over time. Several months may be needed for you skin to heal thoroughly, but do not be alarmed if it may take longer than expected.

**Q: What can you do to minimize the scarring?**

A: We will provide you with an information sheet to care for your incision at home. We will also advise you when it is best to apply scar-minimising creams.