

## CHECKLIST: How to choose a cosmetic surgeon and avoid potential health risks



Finding the right cosmetic surgeon can be difficult. And the consequences of choosing the wrong one can be severe. Inexperienced, unqualified or sloppy surgeons can cause long-lasting or even permanent damage to your body.

So how to know who to trust, where to look and what to watch out for?

**To help simplify the task, here is our five point guide to making the right choice.**

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## Be clear about what you want



### WHAT TO CONSIDER:

- What prompted your interest in cosmetic surgery? Be honest about your motivations.
- Have you spoken with a counsellor about your motivations? Issues of low self-esteem or negative self-image may be better suited to treatment from a counsellor or therapist.
- Have you investigated non-surgical alternatives?
- Do you know what you want your operation to achieve?
- Are you being realistic and precise with your expectations?
- Have you spoken with anyone who has already undergone the procedure?

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## Be prepared to pay



### WHAT TO AVOID:

- Be wary of no fee or free consultations - your surgeon's time is valuable, if he or she is giving it away for free then ask why.
- Cheap surgery abroad may sound like a good idea, but can often end up costing more in the long run.
- Too-good-to-be true offers are often just that - too good to be true. Be wary of loyalty card schemes, buy-one-get-one-free offers, easy finance terms or other financial incentives.

3

## Get recommendations



### WHO TO ASK:

- Speak to friends and family members who have undergone the procedure.
- Ask your GP for trusted local surgeons or clinics.
- Do your research on the General Medical Council's (GMC) [specialist register](#).
- Meet at least two, if not three, surgeons before making your final decision.

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## Check for qualifications



### WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

#### Surgeons who are...

- Working for the NHS.
- Registered with the General Medical Council (GMC).
- Listed on the GMC's [specialist register](#) in the area of practice relevant to your procedure.
- A member of the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons ([BAAPS](#)).
- An expert in the part of the body you want operated on.

## Get the answers you need



### WHAT TO ASK DURING YOUR CONSULTATION:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> What happens during the procedure - before, during and after?                        | <input type="checkbox"/> How much will the surgery cost, including aftercare or any follow-up treatments?               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Will the results of the procedure match your expectations?                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Is your surgeon insured to perform cosmetic surgery in the UK?                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How many times has your surgeon performed this operation in total? In the past year? | <input type="checkbox"/> Is your surgeon aware of any and all medical conditions you have or medications you're taking? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> What are the possible risks, side effects and problems?                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Are you consulting with the person who will perform your procedure?                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> What is the aftercare and recovery time?   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> What happens if something goes wrong or you're not satisfied with the result?        |   |

### WHAT TO ASK AFTER YOUR CONSULTATION:

#### Step 1

- Have you taken at least two weeks 'cooling off' time before committing to surgery?
- Have you thought through the practical considerations of who will look after you and how you will get home after the operation?
- Did the surgeon fully answer all your questions to your satisfaction?

#### Step 2

- Did you consult with a surgical consultant, patient care coordinator or clinic manager (who often have no medical training)?
- Was your surgeon vague about the outcome of the operation?
- Did your surgeon rush through your appointment?
- Did your surgeon claim they could perform miracles?
- Did your surgeon try to sell you additional surgeries?

If you answered 'yes' to any of the questions in **Step 2** consider finding another surgeon

**DON'T LISTEN TO THE ALARM CLOCK!**



## **Take your time**

One last piece of advice before you commit to any surgical or non-surgical cosmetic procedures: **take your time.**

The impact of surgery can last a lifetime, so resist the urge to go under the knife before you have completed all your research and fully considered all your options.

## **For more help and advice**

British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons (BAAPS)

[www.baaps.org.uk](http://www.baaps.org.uk)

Royal College of Surgeons

[www.rcseng.ac.uk](http://www.rcseng.ac.uk)

British Association of Plastic Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons (BAPRAS)

[www.bapras.org.uk](http://www.bapras.org.uk)

General Medical Council

[www.gmc-uk.org](http://www.gmc-uk.org)

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