

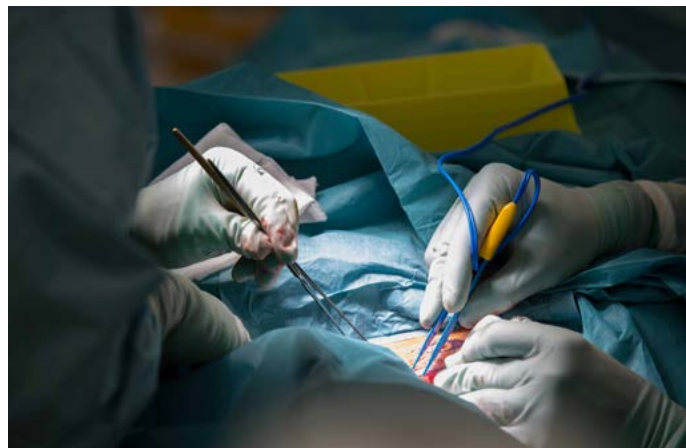
GOING OVERSEAS FOR SURGERY?



Undergoing surgery involves a degree of risk, no matter where it is performed.

All countries have different standards of medical care, surgical training and credentialing of medical practitioners. The following risks need to be considered if medical care is sought outside of Australia and New Zealand:

- Inadequately qualified, registered or experienced medical practitioners and support staff.
- Poor or non-existent documentation of the treatment undertaken.
- Counterfeit implants or medications.
- Difficult gaining informed consent about your treatment, particularly if you do not speak the language fluently.
- Potential restriction periods on fitness to fly commercially, due to an increased risk of Venous Thromboembolism (VTE) after surgical procedures.
- Cost of evacuation if health deterioration or complications cannot be managed where you have your treatment.
- Antibiotic resistant bacteria may be more common in countries outside of Australia and New Zealand.



What you can do:

Continuity of care from your doctor is vital – if you are having surgery, the surgical procedure is only one part of the management of your condition. You should have appropriate pre-operative consultation with their surgeon about treatment options, possible risks, pre and post-operative care and rehabilitation.

Before you commit yourself to the surgical treatment, RACS advises you to ensure each of the following boxes are ticked:

- I am satisfied with the qualifications, accreditation and experience of all the medical and allied health practitioners involved in my surgery.
- I have discussed the surgery with the surgeon who will be performing my operation.
- Between the clinical consultation and the operation I have had sufficient time to consider the proposed surgery.
- My existing medical conditions are well controlled.
- The facility meets the appropriate standards for infection control, sterilisation of equipment and drug integrity.
- The facility is able to provide me with copies of all my medical records before I return home.
- I have a plan if there are any complications with my surgery.
- The medical practitioner and the facility are contactable if I feel ill after discharge and I have their contact details.
- I am aware of any additional costs should I get sick after the operation and require extra time in hospital.
- I have taken out appropriate travel health insurance to cover me should there be health issues including post-surgical complications whilst I am overseas.



RACS advises patients who are considering surgical treatment overseas to visit Smart Traveller (AUS) or Safe Travel (NZ), and seek out internationally accredited facilities for their surgical care.

Additional Resources:

Smart Traveller Australia

<http://smartraveller.gov.au/guide/all-travellers/health/Pages/medical-tourism.aspx>

Safe Travel New Zealand

<https://www.safetravel.govt.nz/news/medical-tourism>

Centres for Disease Control and Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov/features/medicaltourism/>

Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons

<http://www.plasticsurgery.org.au/>

New Zealand Association of Plastic Surgeons

<http://plasticsurgery.org.nz/>

Australian Orthopaedic Association

<https://www.aoa.org.au/>

New Zealand Orthopaedic Association

<http://nzoa.org.nz/>

General Surgeons Australia

<http://www.generalsurgeons.com.au/>

New Zealand Association of General Surgeons

<https://www.nzags.co.nz/>

Obesity Surgery Society of Australia

<http://www.ossanz.com.au/>

International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery

www.isaps.org

Joint Commission International (U.S.)

<http://www.jointcommissioninternational.org>

Trent International Accreditation Scheme (U.K.)

<http://www.healthbase.com/resources/medical-tourism/accreditationsand-standards/trent-accreditation-scheme-or-tas.html>

RACS Medical Tourism Position Paper

http://www.surgeons.org/media/16070945/2017-02-23_pos_fes-pst-026_medical_tourism.pdf