

### What is the surgeon's training?

A gynecologist performing a breast augmentation or a dermatologist doing a face lift are not appropriate choices.

### Is the plastic surgeon certified?

The ISAPS website lists the names and addresses of over 2,200 certified plastic surgeons in 93 countries.

### Is the plastic surgeon's facility certified?

Ask your surgeon if his facility is certified and by which certifying agency.

### Does your personal health insurance cover you outside your country?

Most health insurance providers do not cover individuals for surgery performed outside their own country. Consider obtaining International Medical Coverage that may be available through your insurance agent.

### What about aftercare?

Patients should stay in the area where the surgery was performed for at least one week, depending on the procedure. Ask in advance where you will stay and if this facility is prepared to care for your post operative needs.

### What about complications?

If you have complications or need revisions to your surgery when you return home, determine what doctor will care for you and who will pay for these secondary procedures - before you travel for surgery.

### Do the key personnel at the surgeon's office speak your language fluently?

If you cannot be easily understood, be prepared for complications.

### With whom are you communicating?

You should be talking directly with the doctor's staff and the doctor. A travel agent should only make travel and accommodations arrangements.

### Is the surgeon a member of recognized national and international societies?

ISAPS membership is by invitation and is granted to applicants only after extensive screening. Make sure your surgeon is a member of the recognized national society of plastic surgery in his or her country.

### Have you checked for references?

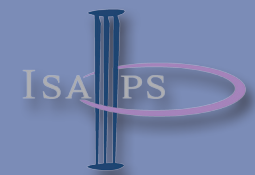
Ask for names and contact information of patients who have recently had a similar procedure and contact them about their experience with the surgeon, their staff, aftercare facilities and post-operative follow up.

*The International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ISAPS), representing over 2,200 of the world's leading board certified aesthetic plastic surgeons in 93 countries provides comprehensive guidelines for patients traveling for plastic surgery procedures.*

*These ISAPS guidelines reflect a growing trend and were created to address the thousands of inquiries ISAPS has received from patients, medical professionals, media and governmental organizations.*

*Patients around the world have looked to ISAPS for over 40 years for the most accurate and reliable information about qualified plastic surgeons and advice about procedures. ISAPS is pleased to provide a worldwide standard for patients to reference when traveling for aesthetic plastic surgery.*

# AESTHETIC PLASTIC SURGERY INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS



ISAPS members are qualified and nationally certified plastic surgeons in 93 countries. Founded in 1970 at the United Nations in New York, the ISAPS mission is to continuously educate our member surgeons in the latest procedures, to disseminate accurate and current information to the public and the media, and to promote safe surgery.

This brochure has been designed to provide you with helpful information to assist you in making informed choices concerning aesthetic plastic surgery. Our members are dedicated to providing you with the highest quality care in the safest possible setting. We are committed to your safety, comfort, and privacy. In the current global environment where interest in aesthetic surgery has never been higher, and any physician can claim to be a plastic surgeon, we want to help you select a qualified and well-trained physician for your procedure.

Our members are the leaders in this specialty. To qualify for membership in ISAPS, plastic surgeons must undergo many years of surgical specialty training, pass qualifying and certifying examinations in their respective countries, and they must be current members of their local national societies of plastic and aesthetic surgery. They agree to abide by the high ethical standards of these societies. Once these requirements have been met, they apply for membership in ISAPS and undergo a rigorous evaluation process to establish their qualifications, capabilities, and commitment to the highest standards of ethics and patient safety.

Please remember that all surgery carries risk. Complications can and do happen. To ensure that your aesthetic surgery experience is safe and successful, YOU must do your “homework”. There are four factors that will influence your safety and the outcome of your procedure:

- **you – the patient – and your general health**
- **the procedure you choose**
- **the surgeon you choose**
- **the facility where the operation takes place**

You must fully disclose your medical history, including allergies, medications, and previous operations so that your physician may assess risk and make appropriate decisions. Herbal remedies are also medications and must be disclosed to your surgeon. The procedures you choose will affect the degree of risk. Some procedures, specifically abdominoplasty (tummy tuck) and other more extensive body contouring procedures, carry higher risk than, for example, facial aesthetic surgery or breast surgery.

The qualifications and technical skills of the surgeon you choose play an extremely important role, as does the facility where the operation takes place. Be aware that procedures such as injections are sometimes performed by clinic staff who are not properly trained surgeons. This is not a safe situation for you.

Very few countries regulate who may call themselves a plastic surgeon, and very few countries regulate where such procedures may be performed. In most countries, any physician with a medical degree can call himself or herself a plastic surgeon. Similarly, in most countries those physicians can operate in their own offices, in an unregulated environment. Obviously, these are the physicians and facilities you need to avoid.

It is important to select a board certified plastic surgeon who operates in a facility that has been inspected and certified. This is the minimum you can do to ensure your own safety and your satisfaction with the outcome of your procedure.

We encourage you to contact the ISAPS National Secretary in your country to help you find the correct surgeon for the surgery you would like. They are listed on our website under *The Society*. We hope that this information will help you research procedures, surgeons, and facilities to make you happy with the outcome of your aesthetic surgery or non-surgical procedure.



Carlos Uebel, MD, PhD - President, ISAPS

**Aesthetic Plastic Surgery** refers to surgical procedures that represent a blend of art and science. The word aesthetic has been defined as “the appreciation of beauty or good taste”. The word plastic is derived from the Greek word *plastikos*, meaning to mold or shape. Aesthetic Plastic Surgery refers to procedures that are designed to reshape normal structures of the body so that one’s appearance and self esteem will be improved. Typically, all plastic surgery procedures including reconstructive procedures have an aesthetic component as restoring form and function are best accomplished when the surgeon has a true sense of what is beautiful and therefore aesthetically pleasing.

## SELECTING AN AESTHETIC PLASTIC SURGEON

Once a patient has made the decision to proceed with aesthetic plastic surgery, the next step is choosing the aesthetic plastic surgeon who is right for you.

**Regulations, training, and certification policies** for aesthetic plastic surgeons vary throughout the world. Membership in the International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ISAPS) means that a surgeon has been certified in their own country, recommended for membership in writing by two ISAPS members, and has been in active practice for at least three years. A surgeon’s application must be approved by the National Secretary from the applicant’s country, and all members of ISAPS review candidates for membership before they are admitted.

**No other international organization screens its members as thoroughly and extensively as ISAPS does.** ISAPS has as its mission, the highest standards for membership, providing for the continuing education of its members, and ensuring the protection of and service to the public.

**Before selecting a plastic surgeon**, consider the specific kind of surgery required: for example facial, breast, or body.

- **Start by determining if the prospective surgeon is trained and experienced in the procedure(s) in which you have an interest.**
- **Also, inquire if the surgeon has hospital privileges to perform the procedure(s). Hospital committees routinely examine the training of surgeons and thereby determine whether to allow the surgeon to perform the procedure(s) at that institution.**

- **Working in an accredited outpatient surgery center is another indication that the surgeon’s training has been evaluated and determined to be acceptable. Validation of the training of a surgeon is a prerequisite to obtaining a certificate from many accreditation organizations.**

The surgeon you select should have experience in performing a wide range of aesthetic plastic surgery procedures.

It is appropriate to ask a prospective plastic surgeon to allow you to see before and after photos that display his or her typical results for the procedure(s) you would like. Don’t be shy about asking to speak with a patient who has undergone similar procedures.

If a procedure is to be performed in a doctor’s office or clinic, ask what facilities are available if something goes wrong.

Aesthetic plastic surgery is after all a surgical procedure with risks and potential side effects. Ask the surgeon to explain all of the risks and possible side effects. Communicate your concerns and your specific goals and ask the doctor to address how realistic your goals are.

Finally, a patient must be comfortable with their doctor – both with his or her manner and with their training and past experience. A patient’s comfort level with their doctor keeps communications open and prepares the patient for this surgical procedure in the most positive and beneficial way possible.