

Travelling Abroad for Medical Treatment Questions

Before travelling abroad to undergo a medical or surgical procedure, it is important to undertake adequate research and ask the correct questions in advance to ensure you are well informed and have sufficient understanding.

The information on this page aims to provide you with some questions to consider asking the health care professional who will be carrying out your treatment. Not all questions will be relevant to your treatment, and you may have further relevant questions.

Always ask to talk to the overseas health care professional directly and be wary if people with no relevant health care qualifications insist on answering questions specific to your treatment.

Questions about your treatment

- What is your healthcare facility's success rate for the procedure I am travelling to you for?
- What are the expected outcomes of my treatment?
- Will my treatment need to be repeated in the future, and if so, when?
- What are the possible complications of my treatment, and how likely are they for me?
 - Note to traveller: Consider how complications might impact your physical and mental health if they were to occur.
- What tests or investigations will I require in advance to prepare for my treatment? (e.g., blood tests), and who should perform these?
- Will copies of all my medical notes, investigations, laboratory results, post-operative instructions be given to me upon discharge? Will they be translated into English if I need them to be? Will there be an additional fee for these?

Questions about your recovery period

- How long will I need to stay in the hospital / health care facility?
- Will nursing care / food and drinks / medications / dressings etc be provided?
- Upon my discharge from hospital / health care facility, where will I stay before returning home? Will hotel accommodation be organised for me?
- Will there be any activities I may be advised to avoid (e.g., sun exposure, swimming, strenuous activities, alcohol etc)
- Will I need to bring a travel companion to help with my recovery / mobility?
- What post-operative follow-up care (e.g., check-ups, blood tests, wound dressings, physiotherapy, dietary restrictions etc) will be required after my treatment? How long will I need follow-up care for? Where will I be able to get this done?
- If follow-up assessment is required after I return home, where will I access this?

- Note to traveller: Check with your UK general practice if this would be available after you get home? Will there be additional costs involved?
- How long will I need to stay within easy travel distance of the overseas hospital / health care facility before I can safely travel home?
- When is it likely I will be considered 'fit to fly' home?
 - Note to traveller: Check with your airline when they would consider you 'fit to fly' after your treatment.
- What is my expected total recovery time, including how long I will need to be off work?

Questions about the overseas hospital / health care facility

It is important to check if the hospital / health care facility is approved by medical regulatory authorities for that country. Note that regulations for organisational assessment and accreditation will vary from country to country.

- Are hygiene and infection control levels of a high standard?
- Are quality assurance and safety standards routinely regulated and inspected?
- Will qualified nursing care be available?
- Will my meals / medications / dressing supplies etc be provided by the hospital / health care facility?
- What language(s) is/are commonly spoken in the hospital / health care facility?
- Will effective translation services be available if I am not fluent in the spoken language(s)?

Questions about any associated costs of treatment

It is important to closely check what is and isn't covered in the quoted costs for your treatment and be aware of any hidden costs. Check if costs are included for:

- return travel (flights, taxis, etc)
- the procedure itself
- specialist's fees
- hospital / health care facility admission fees
- translator's fees
- nursing and other supportive care (e.g. physiotherapy, speech therapy)
- medications and essential medical supplies (e.g. sterile equipment, dressing supplies, mobility aids), both whilst admitted and upon discharge
- food and drinks whilst admitted
- booking / admin fees
- copies of medical records and test results upon discharge
- hotel or other accommodation (before you are admitted, and after you are discharged from the hospital / health care facility)
- aftercare (post-operative consultations, dressing changes etc)
- further treatment / extended hospital stays if something goes wrong
- additional costs for any travel companions (travel, accommodation, food etc)

