

## Questions you should ask your doctor

Are you a Member of the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery and Medicine?

How many times have you performed this procedure before and in the last year?

What are the risks associated with the procedure and what is your own complication rate?

What are the alternatives to the procedure being considered?

Can I see photographs of the results of your own patients who looked similar to me before their surgery?

Can I see photographs of the kind of result it will be impossible for me to achieve?

The biggest factor determining what you will look like after a cosmetic procedure is what you look like now.

Seeing both types of photos will help you to understand the kind of result you should realistically be able to achieve.

Do not be afraid to ask these questions.  
No competent doctor will mind answering them.

## Questions you should ask yourself

Do I feel confident with this doctor?

Do I feel confident about having this procedure?

Have all my questions been answered satisfactorily?

Am I happy with all the arrangements which have been made for me?

Do I understand that there are risks and potential complications with this procedure?

Remember that cosmetic procedures are elective. You can and should delay procedures until a time that is appropriate, bearing in mind other commitments such as family or other social activities, work commitments and finance.

Most importantly, you should not proceed until you are satisfied that you have selected the right doctor and have received and considered all the necessary information to make an informed decision.

## What to do when things go wrong

If you feel the outcome of your procedure is not appropriate or if there has been a complication, first draw your concerns to the attention of your doctor. They are usually in the best position to respond and ensure the best outcome.

If you are uncomfortable voicing your concerns with your doctor personally, talk to the nurse or other clinic staff and ask them to convey your concerns to the doctor. Hopefully, with everyone working as a team, the problems can be rectified.

If you feel you cannot approach the clinic with your concerns or if you wish to make a complaint about your treatment, there are a number of options available to you. All ACCSM Fellows and Members must adhere to a strict and enforceable Code of Practice. Accordingly, you may:

- Lodge a complaint with the College, which will be acknowledged and placed before an investigating panel with disciplinary authority. A copy of the College's Patient Satisfaction Assurance procedure is enclosed for your information.

Alternatively you may:

- lodge a complaint with your state or territory health care complaints commission - a government body specially tasked to investigate and advise on patients' health complaints.
- lodge a complaint with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency – AHPRA.
- seek legal redress against the practitioner by engaging a solicitor.

Please call the ACCSM on 1800 804 781  
if you would like further information

All correspondences to  
PO Box 36 Parramatta NSW 2124  
Phone 1800 804 781

[admin@accsm.org.au](mailto:admin@accsm.org.au) | [www.accsm.org.au](http://www.accsm.org.au)



AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE  
OF COSMETIC SURGERY AND MEDICINE

**PATIENT  
INFORMATION  
BROCHURE**

---

“Things you  
should know”

---

## Choosing your doctor

You should choose a doctor based on the doctor's relevant education, training, experience and proven competence with respect to the specific procedure you are considering.

## Cosmetic Surgery and Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery - what is the difference?

Although Cosmetic Surgery and Plastic Surgery are frequently talked of interchangeably, they are different. Cosmetic surgery is performed on normal healthy structures of the body in order to change or improve the patient's appearance and elevate their self-esteem. Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery is different to Cosmetic Surgery because it is performed to improve function or repair appearance impaired by congenital defects, disease or trauma.

## Cosmetic medicine and cosmetic surgery - what is the difference?

Doctors who are fellows of the ACCSM are accredited as either surgical or medical fellows.

It is important to note that membership of a particular professional group does not guarantee the cosmetic surgery provider's experience in a particular procedure.

So make sure you ask your doctor whether they are accredited by the College for the procedure you are contemplating.

## ACCSM Accreditations

**"FACCSM (Surg)"** means Fellow of the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery and Medicine. These doctors are trained in cosmetic surgery and accredited by the College to perform invasive cosmetic surgery such as breast augmentation. To qualify as an FACCSM (Surg) a doctor must have three years basic surgery training post medical school and a further two years specific cosmetic surgery training.

**"FACCSM (Med)"** means Fellow of the Faculty of Medicine of the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery and Medicine. The Faculty of Medicine represents trained cosmetic physicians who have been accredited by the College in the field of Cosmetic medicine.

Fellows of the Faculty of Medicine FACCSM (Med) are not accredited by the College to perform invasive cosmetic surgery. Some FACCSM (Med), because of special training and experience obtained outside of the College's accredited programs, may have the expertise to perform these procedures competently, but you should establish with the doctor their training and experience in the procedure you are considering.

## Procedure specific registers

In addition to the Fellowship qualifications, the College maintains "Procedure Specific Registers".

These registers, which are available on the College website, provide reassurance that you are in the hands of a trained, accredited and experienced practitioner.

To be included on a Procedure Specific Register a doctor has to have done a minimum of 50 such procedures.

In some cases the minimum is 100 cases.



## Getting the most out of your consultation

When considering a cosmetic procedure you want to be sure that you get all of the information you need to make an informed choice.

Be sure of what it is that you are trying to correct. This is more important than concentrating on asking about a specific procedure because there will usually be a number of different options to achieve the result you seek.

Don't be afraid to ask questions. If you do not understand something, then say so. Any competent doctor will want you to understand everything to your satisfaction, and it will help your doctor understand what you are trying to achieve. It doesn't matter if you think the questions are minor - if they worry you then they are important.

## Risks and complications

You should consider seeking a second opinion before having any invasive elective procedure.

Every procedure, whether it is an operation or a non-surgical procedure, carries an element of risk. This is important to understand and discuss during your consultation.

Some risks are minor, such as redness or bruising after an injection. Some risks are more serious, such as a severe infection, scarring or unevenness. Sometimes a procedure may not turn out the way a patient would like, despite the best appropriate efforts.

Sometimes patients hope for a result that is difficult or sometimes impossible to achieve. It is important for both you and your doctor to make sure that expectations are realistic and reasonably achievable.

You need to make sure your doctor discusses risks and complications with you to your satisfaction. If you are not sure then you should not proceed.

