



Chest Surgery Questions

CS-02

Points to Remember

- > Doctors and surgeons are service providers who work for you. You are hiring them for their expertise and skill doing a medical procedure on your body.
- > Don't be afraid to ask questions, no matter how trivial or how personal you think they'll sound. In fact, it's a good idea to write down your questions before hand, so you won't forget any of them, and to make a note of the surgeon's answers as well.
- > You should feel a bond of trust between you and your Surgeon, and the whole experience from the initial consultation right through to post operative visits should be focused on you, your comfort and your needs.
- > For male chest reconstructive surgery you will need a specialist Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon.
- > A surgeon's experience is his or her most valuable asset and should also be your initial guide to gauge competency.
- > Don't be taken in by glossy advertisements. Not all medical practitioners performing cosmetic surgery are plastic surgeons. Some don't even have formal surgical qualifications so always check their credentials first.

Be wary of a surgeon who

- > Does not have hospital privileges for your procedure
- > Is certified or completed residency in an unrelated speciality
- > Is unwilling to answer your questions
- > Is impatient or has an arrogant manner
- > Is unprofessional in office or personal appearance
- > Pressures you to add unnecessary procedures

Ask yourself when deciding on a surgeon

1. Does this doctor have the experience to know how to deal with potential complications that may appear during the operation?
2. Do I trust this doctor to work with me to get the best outcome if, in the remote chance, that something goes wrong?
3. Is this surgeon is certified by the *Royal Australasian College of Surgeons* with the letters *FRACS* after their name? Ask whether the surgeon is registered as a *specialist Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon in Australia*.
4. Ask to see before and after photos of other chests the surgeon has done, to see the range of results the surgeon gets. When choosing a surgeon, ask around for recommendations from your GP and other patients.
5. Is the surgeon comfortable with performing this procedure? How much experience with male chest reconstructive surgery s/he has had. How many of these procedures has s/he performed in the past?
6. Ask what techniques the surgeon prefers to use on chests and why these are preferred by your surgeon. Ask which technique s/he would recommend for you and why.
7. Ask about nipple erection and sensation following the technique proposed for you.
8. Ask about scarring. What scars will be left and where?
9. Ask what will happen in the hospital – Before the operation? During the operation? After the operation? Ask about aftercare, and take notes on the answers. How will you be followed up?
10. Ask what complications the surgeon has seen and how s/he handles them. Make sure you ask, what happens if something goes wrong? You need to be satisfied you will receive extra special care by competent medical professionals.
11. Ask what is the approximate total cost of the procedure i.e. including the anaesthetist, surgical assistant, pathology tests, hospital costs and postoperative follow-ups? Are there any Medicare, Health Insurance or tax rebates applicable and is GST included in the cost?
12. You can learn a lot about a surgeon from their staff. The surgeon will have chosen them and taught them to reflect their attitude to reconstructive surgery. If the staff are not interested in you as a person, be very wary; it may also be true of the surgeon.
13. Then ask yourself: Is this the type of surgery I want? Does the surgeon demonstrate competency and a good success rate with this surgery? Does this surgeon's agenda match my own? Do I feel comfortable with this surgeon? If you are uncomfortable with any of the answers, shop around some more.
14. It is a lot better to get the surgery you really want from a surgeon whom you have confidence in, even if it means a longer wait or more travel.

FTM Australia

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The information contained in this FactSheet is not medical advice.

Please consult with a medical doctor who is qualified to interpret your signs, symptoms, blood tests, and development in the context of your personal medical history.

Formal surgical training in Australia is demanding and extensive.

The gold standard for Surgeons is rigorous training requirements laid down by the *Royal Australasian College of Surgeons* (RACS) or its equivalent. This is the only accredited college in Australia and the only recognised surgical qualification in Australia. Australian surgeons will have FRACS after their name.

The gold standard for Plastic Surgeons is membership of the *Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons* (ASPS).

For more information

The Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons website – <http://www.plasticsurgery.org.au/>
You can phone the *Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons* information hotline on 1300 367 446 or visit their website to make sure your surgeon is listed and accredited.

Revised 19 December 2005