

Making safe choices

Information for people considering
a cosmetic treatment

Making safe choices

Before you make a decision about where to go for cosmetic treatment, there are some important points to consider - this leaflet will help you to make that decision.

To ensure that treatments are carried out safely, all private clinics and hospitals in the independent sector that provide cosmetic surgery and laser and intense pulsed light (IPL) treatment **must** be registered and inspected by the Healthcare Commission.



We are the official body responsible for regulating and assessing healthcare in both the independent sector and the NHS in England.

Registration with the Commission not only reduces the risk of poor practice, but also assures people using the services that the provider meets national minimum standards for safe care.



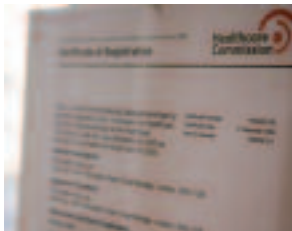
We check each provider to make sure that they meet a number of standards including the quality of their treatment and services and the safety and cleanliness of their premises and equipment. We also look at the qualifications and skills of their staff, their provision for training and professional development and their procedures for handling any complaints.

We continue to check providers after approval of their registration to ensure that they maintain these good standards of care.

Checking that a provider is registered

Before deciding on any cosmetic surgery or treatment using lasers and intense pulsed light (IPL), you should check with the Healthcare Commission to find out if the practitioner or clinic is legally registered.

The types of cosmetic surgery that must be registered include services such as facelifts, liposuction, tummy tucks and breast surgery. The Commission also regulates the use of lasers and IPL treatments, including procedures ranging from hair removal to eye surgery.



When considering cosmetic surgery, it is very important that you do not commit to any treatment from a hospital or clinic who cannot provide

you with details of their registration. You should ask to see confirmation of the registration of a hospital or clinic first.

If a provider of cosmetic services offers a treatment without the required registration, they are not legally registered to provide that treatment and their insurance may not cover them or you, as they are practising outside the law.



Non-surgical cosmetic procedures

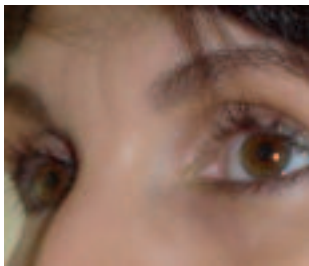
Non-surgical procedures, such as muscle relaxing injections, for example VISTABEL®, Botox® and Dysport®, and remodelling techniques using cells, tissue or synthetic products (dermal fillers) are not currently regulated.

Even though these treatments do not involve surgery, it does not mean that they are free of risk. You must make sure that the person or people offering the treatment are trained and experienced to enable them to provide the treatment safely.

One of the risks of using unregistered services or having a treatment that is not currently under regulation is that the standards of the provider are not checked. This could mean that they are not appropriately trained and may put you at risk of harm during the treatment.

What you should do before deciding on any treatment

- if the service is required to be registered, check that the provider is registered with the Healthcare Commission
 - research the procedure and understand the risks, side-effects and possible complications
 - choose a qualified and reputable practitioner that has been appropriately trained and can provide you with the necessary care after the procedure
 - find out about the hospital or clinic you intend to use - the latest inspection reports are available on the Healthcare Commission website
 - ask the right questions to help you decide on whether to have the treatment and what other alternatives exist - don't be pressured into having treatment immediately
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More information to help you make safe choices when deciding on cosmetic surgery and non-surgical procedures is available on the Department of Health website:

www.dh.gov.uk/cosmeticsurgery

Cosmetic surgery abroad

Cosmetic surgery carried out abroad is not regulated or checked by the Healthcare Commission. Therefore, we are not able to help if the procedure does not go according to plan. It is important to know that not all countries have the same regulatory framework as England, so standards may vary considerably.

Further information

To keep up to date on the regulation of cosmetic surgery, check if a provider is registered and find out more about cosmetic procedures, visit our website:

www.healthcarecommission.org.uk/cosmeticsurgery

This information is available in other formats and languages on request.

Please telephone our helpline: 0845 601 3012

or e-mail:

feedback@healthcarecommission.org.uk
