

Going abroad for your dental care

What you need to
know before you go



Before you commit to travelling abroad for dental treatment, it's important you are fully aware of what to expect and what risks are involved. You may know how to raise concerns about your dental treatment in the UK, but are you familiar with the process in a foreign country?



As the UK dental regulator, all dental professionals must be registered with us to work in the UK. We set the standards they must adhere to. We can't guarantee another organisation like us exists in other countries, or even that the standards will be the same as they are here. We recommend you do as much research as you can and find out the facts before you go to ensure your treatment abroad meets your expectations.



Checking regulation

Dental regulation is likely to vary according to country, so it's a good idea to do some initial research on where your planned treatment will take place. Does that country have a professional regulatory body? Is it compulsory for dental professionals to be registered with them? You can find out about health regulators and professional bodies in other countries by visiting www.healthregulation.org.

If there is a regulatory body, you may want to visit their website to find out about the standards they enforce, what qualifications dental professionals must have and who to contact if you have a complaint about your treatment.



Initial consultation

Some overseas clinics will have a UK base offering initial consultations in this country before you travel abroad for treatment. Others may offer free consultations if you're prepared to travel. This is your chance to ask as many questions as possible so you can feel safe and confident in your decision.

You should always be assessed by a qualified dentist before being given a treatment plan and cost estimate. If your consultation is in the UK, be sure to ask if the dentist is registered with us (the General Dental Council). If they aren't, they are working illegally and should not be practising in the UK.

You can check if a dentist is registered with us by visiting our website, www.gdc-uk.org, and searching the online register or by calling us on 020 7167 6000.

As part of your initial consultation, the dentist carrying out your assessment should ask for your full medical history. They should also be interested in your general health, whether you have suffered from any serious illnesses in the past, if you suffer from any chronic medical condition, whether you smoke, and if you've had surgery or a general anaesthetic in the past.



Consult your own dentist

It's always a good idea to speak to your own dentist before considering travelling abroad for your treatment, as they may be able to offer advice based on your dental history. They will also need to be aware of your plans in case of any later complications.





Questions to ask

Don't be afraid to ask lots of questions, even if they seem blunt or obvious. If you are not satisfied with the answers you are given, don't feel you have to commit to anything that day. Go home and do some more research until you feel confident that all your questions have been answered. You may also want to talk to other patients who have travelled abroad for dental treatment by visiting online groups and forums.

Some of the questions you may want to ask are:

- Who will be carrying out my treatment and what qualifications do they have?
- Will the dental team speak English? If not, will you provide a translator on the day of the procedure?
- Do you have any references or testimonials from previous patients?
- How many times have you carried out the procedure I am having? What are the rates of success, complication, readmission and infection?
- Are you regulated by a professional body and do you have to be registered with them?
- Is the work guaranteed for a certain period of time?
- What aftercare do you provide?
- What happens if I am unhappy with the results? Who pays for the extra flights, hotel and remedial work?
- If there are complications and I need further treatment, is this included in the initial cost?
- Do you have insurance to cover this procedure?
- Do you have a complaints system in place? Can I see a copy of it?
- Who can I contact for advice after the treatment?

If the dentist claims to be a specialist, it's also important to ask whether they can back this up. In the UK, we hold lists of dentists entitled to use the title 'specialist'. Entry onto these lists is only granted if a dentist meets certain minimum standards of training. You may want to find out if you can expect the same standards of training from the dentist who will be carrying out your treatment abroad.

We are committed to promoting and developing equal opportunities in all our work.

We want to make sure all of our products and services are accessible to everyone.

If you would like a copy of this leaflet in a different format (for example, large print or audio) or a language other than English, please contact us.

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