

INSIGHTS · ISSUE 03 · OCTOBER 8, 2026

Plastic and reconstructive surgery: why the plan comes before the package

A photo and a price can start a conversation. They cannot tell anyone whether you are ready for surgery, which procedure fits, or how you will recover far from home. This issue applies the evaluation-first approach to plastic and reconstructive surgery for travelers coordinating care in Los Cabos.

Educational only. Not medical advice. One Stop Cabo Health is a medical concierge — not a hospital. Licensed physicians provide clinical care.

Plastic surgery is real surgery

Issue 01 made the case for diagnosis first. Issue 02 explained the clearance work that happens before the operating room (OR). Plastic surgery belongs on that same path — even when the reason for it is personal rather than medical.

The American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) puts it plainly in its briefing on cosmetic surgery travel: cosmetic surgery is real surgery, and every operation carries some risk. Anesthesia, wound healing, blood clots, and infection do not change because the goal is aesthetic. Neither does the need for a medical evaluation, a surgeon who has reviewed your history, and a plan for the weeks after the procedure.

That is the lens for this issue: not which procedure to choose, but what should be in place before you choose a date.

Cosmetic and reconstructive: different reasons, same preparation

Plastic surgery covers two broad categories. Definitions adopted by the American Medical Association (AMA) in 1989, and used by ASPS, describe them this way:

- **Cosmetic surgery** reshapes normal structures of the body to improve appearance.
- **Reconstructive surgery** addresses abnormal structures caused by congenital differences, developmental abnormalities, trauma, infection, tumors, or disease — generally to improve function, and sometimes to restore a more typical appearance.

The [plastic and reconstructive procedures we coordinate](#) in Los Cabos include breast augmentation, reduction, and lift; abdominoplasty; liposuction and body contouring; facial rejuvenation; and breast reconstruction as part of a mastectomy pathway. Our plastic and reconstructive network is still expanding, so availability for a specific procedure is confirmed after specialist review.

If you are in Canada and waiting

Many Canadian patients arrive at this topic through the public system. In the Fraser Institute's *Waiting Your Turn* 2025 survey of physicians, the national median wait for plastic surgery – from referral by a general practitioner to treatment – was 41.5 weeks. Waits vary by province and by procedure, and a long wait is not, on its own, a reason to skip the steps below. For reconstruction connected to cancer care, timing decisions belong with your oncology team.

If you are in the United States and paying privately

ASPS notes that elective cosmetic procedures are not covered by insurance, which is why price so often leads the conversation. Price is a fair question – but it is the second question. The first is whether the plan in front of you fits your body, your history, and your recovery.

Why a photo and a price are not a plan

Online intake often starts with photos and a quote. That can be a useful way to describe your goals. What a photo cannot show is the information that shapes surgical safety: your medications and supplements, prior surgeries, smoking or nicotine use, bleeding or clotting history, heart and lung health, and how you healed the last time.

Those details decide whether a procedure is appropriate, whether procedures should be combined or staged, how long you should stay, and what the anesthesia team needs to know. They are answered by a medical evaluation and an in-person consultation with the operating surgeon – not by a package name.

A written plan should come before a final quote, because the plan determines what the quote should cover.

What “evaluation first” looks like

In practice, the sequence usually runs like this:

1. **Share your goals and records.** Describe what you are considering – or, for reconstruction, share the relevant history and records from your treating physicians.
2. **Specialist review.** A licensed plastic surgeon reviews whether the request is reasonable to pursue and what else is needed.
3. **Pre-surgical evaluation.** Labs, imaging as indicated, cardiac review when needed, and anesthesia risk assessment – matched to the procedure and to you.
4. **In-person consultation.** You meet the operating surgeon before the day of surgery to confirm the plan, the risks, and your expectations.

5. **A written plan.** The procedure, the timeline, where you will recover, follow-up visits in Cabo, and what goes home with you.

Some of this happens before you travel; some happens once you arrive. Which steps can be remote and which must be in person is a clinical decision, not a scheduling convenience. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also recommends seeing your own health care provider or a travel medicine clinician at least four to six weeks before a medical trip.

For why clearance exists at all, see [Insights Issue 02: Before the operating room](#).

Check credentials before you book

Credentials in Mexico can be checked, and checking them is ordinary diligence, not distrust.

- **Professional license.** A physician's professional license number (cédula profesional), including any specialty, can be searched in the National Registry of Professionals (Registro Nacional de Profesionistas), run by Mexico's Ministry of Public Education (SEP, Secretaría de Educación Pública).
- **Board certification.** The Mexican Council of Plastic, Aesthetic and Reconstructive Surgery (CMCPR, Consejo Mexicano de Cirugía Plástica, Estética y Reconstructiva) certifies plastic surgeons in Mexico, renews certification every five years, and publishes a searchable directory.
- **The facility.** Ask where the surgery will take place and what accreditation the facility holds. As the CDC notes, accreditation reflects standards a facility has met — it does not guarantee an outcome.
- **The anesthesia team.** Ask who provides anesthesia and how you will be monitored after surgery.

A good coordinator makes these questions easier to ask, not harder.

For how to check a hospital's certification in Mexico, see [Surgery in Los Cabos: honest answers before you book](#).

Recovery is part of the trip

The procedure takes hours. Recovery takes the rest of the trip — and it is where many itineraries are thinnest.

ASPS cautions that vacation activities can compromise healing after surgery, including sunbathing, alcohol, swimming or snorkeling, water sports, long tours, and exercise. In Los Cabos, that means planning a recovery stay, not a beach week.

Flying home is a clinical decision

Published guidance varies. ASPS suggests waiting five to seven days after body procedures such as liposuction and breast augmentation, and seven to ten days after facial procedures, before flying. The CDC advises delaying air travel 10 to 14 days after major surgeries, particularly those involving the chest. Your operating surgeon sets the date for your case — so book the return flight around that decision, not the other way around.

A coordinated recovery plan covers where you will stay immediately after surgery, transfers to and from follow-up visits, who checks in on you, bilingual communication with the care team, and what happens if the plan needs to change.

Records for the doctors at home

Recovery does not end at the airport. The CDC recommends getting copies of all your medical records from the facility before you return home – translated into English if needed – and arranging follow-up care at home before you travel. ASPS guidance for surgeons who treat traveling patients points the same way: plan continuity of care before surgery and, when necessary, arrange follow-up with a qualified provider near the patient's home.

A useful records packet usually includes the operative report, discharge instructions, medication list, follow-up notes from Cabo, and device details if implants were used. For reconstruction after mastectomy, the packet should also reach the oncology and primary care physicians who manage your ongoing care.

Where a medical concierge fits

One Stop Cabo Health is a medical concierge, not a hospital. Licensed surgeons and physicians make every clinical decision. Our role is ownership of the sequence: one dedicated concierge who coordinates the specialist review, pre-surgical evaluation, in-person consultation, written plan, recovery logistics in Los Cabos, and the records that travel home with you.

Care is coordinated at top-level private hospital facilities in Los Cabos. The plan stays on one timeline with one point of contact – instead of a quote in one inbox, clearance in another, and recovery left to chance.

From clearance to recovery

If you are earlier in the journey, start with diagnosis and clearance, not with an OR date. When you know what you are considering, the path is the same one this series has followed: a clear diagnosis, a pre-surgical evaluation, a written plan – and, for plastic and reconstructive surgery, a recovery and records plan built in from the start.

- Before the operating room: why pre-surgical evaluation exists
- Pre-surgical evaluation in Los Cabos
- Plastic & reconstructive procedures we coordinate
- Diagnosis first: why a clear plan beats “wait and see”

Share your goals — or your records.

[Start a confidential case](#)

See what's typically included in pre-surgical evaluation

contact@onestopcabohealth.com · Same-day typical reply

Frequently asked questions

What should I do before traveling to Mexico for plastic surgery?

Start with a medical evaluation and a written plan, not a booking. That means a specialist review of your goals and history, a pre-surgical evaluation matched to the procedure, an in-person consultation with the operating surgeon, and a recovery and follow-up plan. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also recommends seeing your own health care provider or a travel medicine clinician at least four to six weeks before a medical trip.

How can I verify a plastic surgeon's credentials in Mexico?

Check the surgeon's professional license and board certification. Professional licenses (cédula profesional) can be searched in the National Registry of Professionals run by Mexico's Ministry of Public Education (SEP). Plastic surgery board certification can be checked in the directory of the Mexican Council of Plastic, Aesthetic and Reconstructive Surgery (CMCPEP). Also ask where the surgery will take place and who provides anesthesia.

How long after plastic surgery can I fly home?

Your operating surgeon sets the date, and published guidance varies by procedure. The American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) suggests waiting five to seven days after body procedures such as liposuction and breast augmentation, and seven to ten days after facial procedures. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advises delaying air travel 10 to 14 days after major surgeries, particularly those involving the chest. Book the return flight around your surgeon's decision.

What records should I bring home after plastic surgery abroad?

Bring home copies of all your medical records, translated into English if needed. A useful packet includes the operative report, discharge instructions, medication list, follow-up notes, and device details if implants were used. Share them with your physicians at home, and arrange follow-up care before you travel, as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends.

How do I start a plastic or reconstructive surgery case with One Stop Cabo Health?

Email contact@onestopcabohealth.com or start a confidential case on the contact page with the procedure you are considering and any prior records. One concierge typically replies the same day. Availability for a specific procedure is confirmed after specialist review, and a written plan follows clinical evaluation.

SOURCES

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6. Mexico's Ministry of Public Education (SEP). National Registry of Professionals (Registro Nacional de Profesionistas). <https://cedulaprofesional.sep.gob.mx/>
7. Mexican Council of Plastic, Aesthetic and Reconstructive Surgery (CMCPR). <https://cmcper.org/>

Ready for a written plan before a date?

Tell us the procedure you are considering – or share records from your treating physicians. One dedicated concierge replies, usually the same day.

Start a confidential case

Pre-surgical evaluation in Los Cabos

contact@onestopcabohealth.com

Plaza Koral Center, Km 24.5, Los Cabos, B.C.S.

Read online: www.onestopcabohealth.com/insights/plastic-surgery-plan-first