

# Information for Patients



ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN  
COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

## Surgeons Fees

### The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS):

- *strongly supports full disclosure and transparency of fees as early as possible in the patient-doctor relationship;*
- *advocates that patients understand all available treatment options;*
- *encourages concerned patients to seek second opinions on recommended treatments and the fees to be charged;*
- *maintains that a high fee does not necessarily guarantee quality of treatment, care or outcome.*

#### What should I ask?

Like all medical practitioners, surgeons do not have a standard set of fees. Surgeons fees are based on many factors including the difficulty of your procedure, the time it takes to complete your procedure and the cost of providing care before, during and after your operation. Before you go into hospital as a private patient ask your surgeon about the fees to be charged by all of the health professionals who might be involved in your care. Ask for an estimate of the total cost of your procedure. If you have private health insurance, confirm what you are covered for with your insurance company and ask if you will have any out-of-pocket costs.

#### What is the gap?

There will be separate fees from your surgeon, anaesthetist and other medical services. These services may include a surgical assistant, your hospital bed, surgical theatre charges and any blood tests or x-rays required. You should be aware that private health insurance may not cover the entire cost of your surgery, anaesthesia and other medical services. The difference between what is covered by your private health insurance and the actual fee for these services is known as the 'gap' and is your personal responsibility to pay.

### What are my rights?

#### It is your right to:

- Know the cost involved before agreeing to your procedure;
- Discuss all relevant fees with your surgeon;
- Seek a second opinion if you have any concerns about the course of treatment recommended or the fees to be charged. Your initial referring doctor should assist you to obtain a second opinion;
- Ask your referring doctor to refer you to another surgeon if you are still not satisfied with your proposed course of treatment or fees to be charged.

#### Unreasonable fees

If you consider the fees charged for your surgery to be unreasonable and you have not been able to resolve the issue by discussing it with your surgeon, you can contact the RACS Professional Standards Department about your concerns. RACS has further information about patient consent and excessive surgical fees available on its website at [www.surgeons.org](http://www.surgeons.org).

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#### About the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons

RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and New Zealand. The College is a not-for-profit organisation that represents more than 7000 surgeons and 1300 surgical trainees and International Medical Graduates. RACS also supports healthcare and surgical education in the Asia-Pacific region and is a substantial funder of surgical research. There are nine surgical specialties in Australasia being: Cardiothoracic surgery, General surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedic surgery, Otolaryngology Head-and-Neck surgery, Paediatric surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive surgery, Urology and Vascular surgery.