



Travelling Abroad for Dental Treatment

There are a considerable number of factors for UK citizens to consider before embarking on a trip abroad for dental treatment:

Complications

Many people who are going abroad are wanting more advanced (higher cost) procedures which are more likely to result in complications. No matter how skilled the clinician, there is always a risk of treatment failure. If complications do arise once you are home, it will not always be easy to return to the clinic which provided the treatment, especially if there is an infection. Your insurance may not cover the travel costs involved in returning to the clinic, especially if you wish to return with a partner or friend.

Fine-tuning

Procedures such as crowns, bridges, veneers and implants are not conducive to a rapid turnaround as part of a holiday. Expertise and time are essential to achieving a good outcome. For instance, to achieve a perfect bite, the patient can require repeat visits and a series of adjustments. This may not be possible if the dentist is abroad.

Language barriers

It is always important that your clinician can communicate with you and explain the treatment provided and recommendations for post-surgical care. This is always more difficult when English is not the first language of your practitioner. He or she needs to know exactly what you want and you need to know exactly what you are getting. Problems and complaints often arise from communication issues.

Varying standards and approaches

Different countries have a different concept of aesthetic beauty. For example in the USA very white and even teeth are thought attractive, whereas in the UK we prefer a more natural smile. There are also varying clinical standards and while in the UK dentists are more likely to save a tooth, in some countries, dentists may be more ready to extract. Not all countries have the same high standards of cross-infection control as in the UK, and in developing countries there can be a higher incidence of infectious diseases such as TB. Health workers in the UK follow strict guidelines about continuing to work and the type of work they can provide if they acquire an infectious disease, however in some other countries, where infection levels are higher in the population, there may not be strict rules for healthcare workers.

When something goes wrong

If you have a problem in the UK, you can contact the Dental Complaints Service set up by the GDC as well as get expert independent advice from the BDHF. There are also systems in place for seeking redress. However, if you have a problem overseas the British authorities will be unable to help and, while the BDHF offers advice regardless of where you had your treatment, it agrees that when treatment is carried out abroad it is limited in how it can help.

Calculate costs

Many of those considering travelling abroad believe that private dentistry in the UK is not affordable. However, sometimes this is based on an assumption. It is advisable to talk to a number of practices, check prices and ascertain if they have a payment scheme such as CODEplan in place. This can help spread treatment costs, making treatment both affordable and accessible.

CODE ADP – the Association for Dental Practice, is a for-profit professional services organisation for practice owners and managers. Established in 1978, it marks its 30th anniversary this year. Visit CODEuk.com for further information or call 01409 254 354 or email info@CODEuk.com.