



Everything You Need to Know Before Choosing a Hair Transplant Doctor



— ***Fight ^{THE} FIGHT*** —

***Safe Hair Transplant
Surgery Starts Here***

THE PROBLEM

Black-Market Clinics Are Spreading Around the World

Hair restoration is now a \$4 billion global industry, and that kind of money has fueled a black market where unlicensed, unregulated technicians perform surgery that should only be done by a trained physician.

Some of these clinics have no licensed medical practitioners on site at all. Others use a “token doctor,” someone who greets patients and lends credibility to the marketing, but hands the actual surgery off to technicians working as cheap labor. In the most extreme cases, multiple patients are operated on in the same room at once, assembly-line style.

Black market clinics often lure patients with steep discounts and photos of results that aren't even their own patients'. A lower price alone doesn't mean a clinic is illegitimate, but it's a signal to look closer, not a reason to skip the questions in this guide.

The Risks are Real

When surgery is performed without proper training, sterility, or technique, the results can be serious and, in many cases, irreversible:

- **Infection** from poor sterility or cross-contamination between patients, including the risk of bloodborne infections in high-volume, factory-style clinics
- **Donor over-harvesting** which removes more grafts than the donor area can sustain, sometimes thousands in a single session, leaving the area permanently thinned
- **Visible, excessive scarring** from oversized or overcrowded punches
- **Poor graft growth or survival** from improper handling or placement
- **Unnatural results** from poor hairline design or misdirected grafts





CHECKLIST

Questions You Should Ask

Before you make a final commitment to hair restoration surgery, it's worth asking your surgeon plenty of questions, enough that you feel confident in your decision. If you're not sure where to start, here are the concerns that go through most patients' minds.

- ☐ How do I choose a hair restoration surgeon?
- ☐ Who will evaluate my hair loss and recommend a course of treatment?
- ☐ Who will be involved in performing my surgery?
- ☐ What is their education, training, and experience in treating hair loss?
- ☐ Are they licensed?
- ☐ What should I look for when selecting the right surgeon for me?
- ☐ How do I know the people performing surgery are actually qualified to perform hair restoration surgery?
- ☐ Is everyone involved in my surgery covered by malpractice insurance?
- ☐ What are my surgical options?

KNOW WHO'S DOING WHAT

1 How do I choose a hair restoration surgeon?

That's exactly what the rest of this guide walks you through – question by question.

2 Who will evaluate my hair loss and recommend a course of treatment?

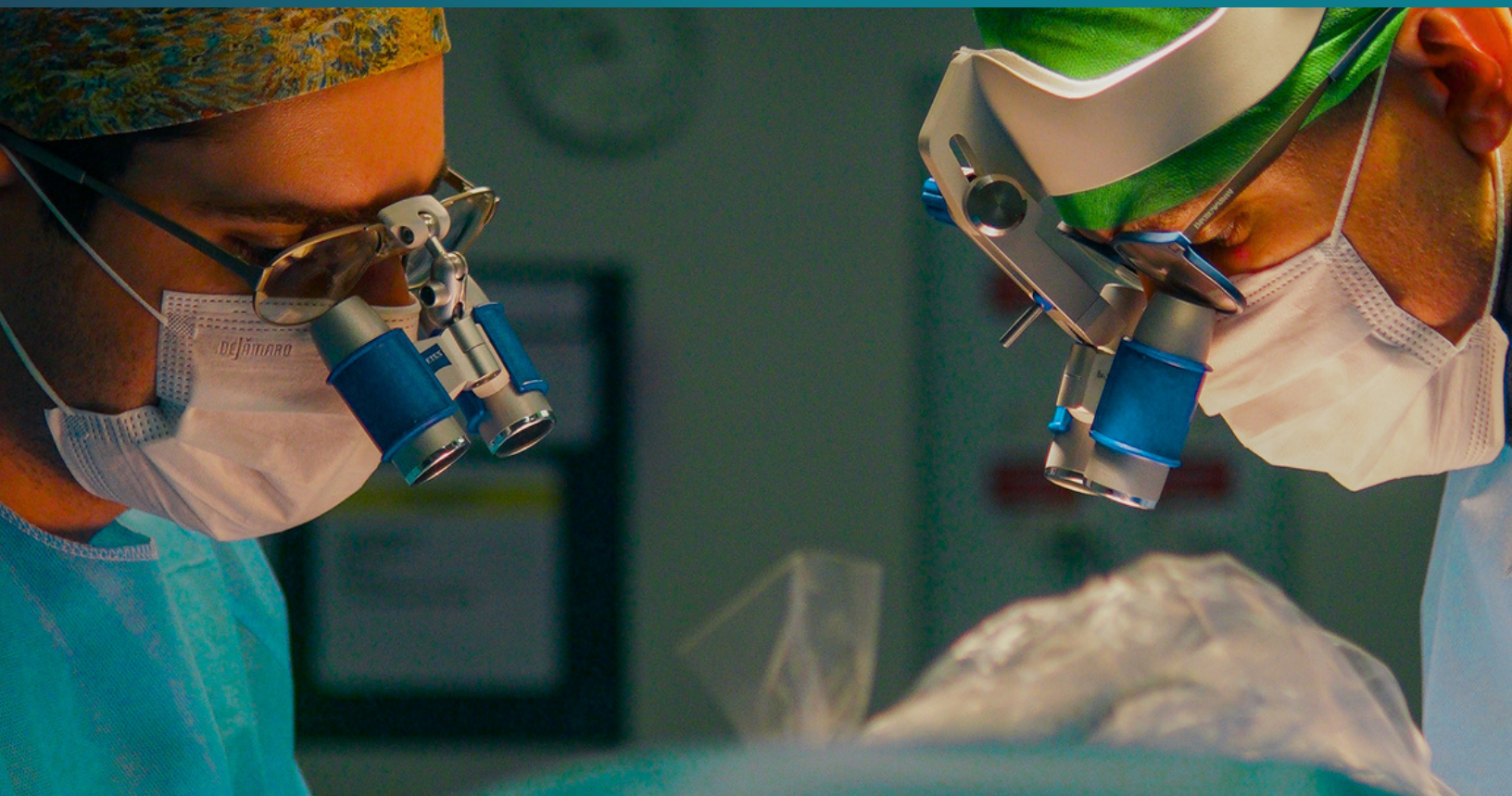
Only the surgeon should perform your medical history and examination and rule out hair diseases or conditions that could affect graft success.



3 Who will be involved in performing my surgery?

Only the Surgeon Should	Technicians Can Only
• Perform medical history & examination to assure graft success • Rule out hair diseases that could affect hair growth & failure • Draw the hairline • Make incisions in the recipient area • Make incisions in the donor area (scoring grafts) • Place grafts with sharp implanters	• Pull grafts already scored by the surgeon • Load implanters and hand them to the surgeon • Place grafts with forceps or dull implanters after the surgeon has made all incisions

Regulations differ by country; in some places technicians cannot perform these steps at all.



CREDENTIALS, EXPERIENCE & TRUST

4 What is their education, training, and experience in treating hair loss?

Training & Credentials

- Medical school and degree (MD, DO, or MBBS)
- Year the degree was awarded, and when they were licensed
- Where they completed residency, and any additional specialty training
- Board certification status
- Membership in a hair restoration specialty society (e.g. ISHRS)

Experience

- How long have they been performing hair restoration surgery, and how many procedures have they done?
- How many do they currently perform per month? A busy, in-demand practice is often a good sign.
- Is hair restoration their focus, or one of several procedures they offer?
- Ask to see before-and-after photos of their own patients

5 Are they licensed?

Ask when the physician was licensed to practice medicine, and whether they're licensed to practice in the state/province/country where your treatment will take place.

6 What should I look for when selecting the right surgeon for me?

How They Practice

- Solo practitioner, or part of a larger practice?
- Will the same physician treat you from start to finish?
- Is the office clean, organized, and easy to reach with billing or insurance questions?
- Did anyone pressure you to decide before you were ready? That's worth paying attention to.

Comfort Level

- Are you welcome to bring a spouse or friend to your consultation?
- Did they listen, answer fully, and explain next steps clearly?
- Were they upfront about all treatment options and costs?
- Do you feel a genuine rapport, the kind you'd want with someone performing surgery on you?





A FEW MORE THINGS TO KNOW

7 How do I know the people performing surgery are actually qualified to perform hair restoration surgery?

Only the surgeon should perform the medical history and examination, draw the hairline, and make all incisions in both the donor and recipient areas.

A technician may only pull and place grafts the surgeon has already prepared. If you can't get a straight answer about who is doing what, that's your answer.

8 Is everyone involved in my surgery covered by malpractice insurance?

Ask whether the physician, and anyone assisting in your procedure carries malpractice insurance. A licensed physician in good standing typically will.

This isn't just paperwork: it's protection for you if something goes wrong, and a provider's willingness to answer this clearly is itself a good sign.

9 What are my surgical options?

Your options depend on your pattern of hair loss, your goals, and your donor supply. A qualified surgeon will walk you through the approaches available to you and help you choose the right one, instead of steering you toward whichever method they're set up to sell.



REAL STORY

This Isn't Hypothetical

Chris booked a low-cost clinic abroad. He never met a doctor, only a translator and a technician.

The result: an unnatural hairline and a severely overharvested donor area. Two repair surgeries later, ISHRS member Dr. Christian Bisanga is still rebuilding what the black-market clinic damaged.

Scan to watch the
case study & repair

*"It's better to be bald than
have a bad hair transplant."*

— Dr. Christian Bisanga



Q & A

Frequently Asked Questions

How long does the procedure take?

Many surgeries require multiple procedures. Patients should have a clear understanding of the time commitment necessary to achieve their desired results.

Will people notice?

Patients should feel comfortable addressing this concern upfront. A hair restoration surgeon can suggest options for making the transplantation less noticeable.

What will it cost?

Surgeons encourage patients to be open about financial questions before surgery. Though rarely covered by insurance, deductible and co-pay questions are best handled early.

If a payment plan is required, both patient and surgeon benefit from a clear discussion.

Will it hurt?

Many patients are hesitant to ask what level of pain to expect. Today's hair restoration surgeons have pre- and post-operative methods to keep you comfortable throughout.

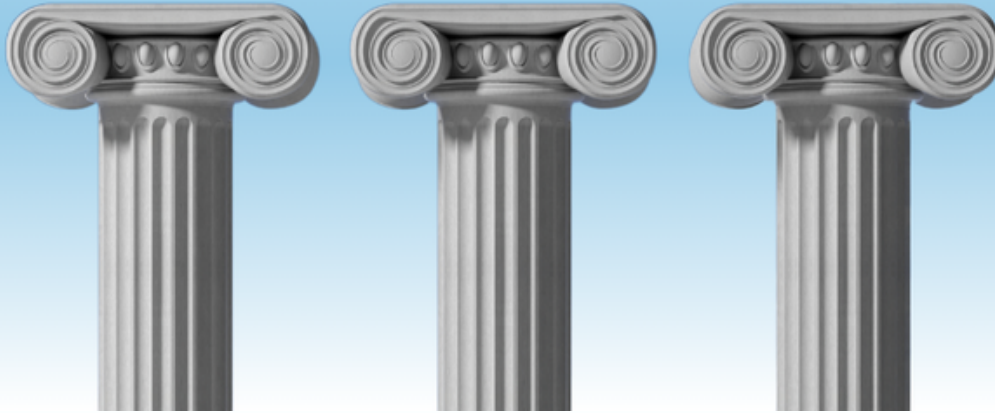




EDUCATION

RESEARCH

COLLEGIALITY



About the ISHRS

The International Society of Hair Restoration Surgery (ISHRS) is a global non-profit medical association and the leading authority on hair loss treatment and restoration, with more than 1,200 members in 80 countries.

Over decades, ISHRS physician members developed and refined follicular unit transplantation and follicular unit excision (FUE) procedures that, when properly performed, safely and effectively reverse the appearance of hair loss for patients with Androgenetic Alopecia (male or female pattern hair loss).

ISHRS is dedicated to achieving excellence in patient outcomes through the highest standards of medical practice, ethics, and research. Each November 11, Hair Transplant Repair Day gives patients harmed by black market surgery access to pro bono repair from participating members. Learn more at HairTransplantRepairDay.org.

ISHRS Core Purpose

Improving quality of life for patients with hair loss through medical therapy and hair restoration surgery.

ISHRS Mission

Fight the Fight Consumer Education Campaign

Educate on the hair transplant industry's best practices and warn of clinics where doctors do not actually perform the surgeries.

About the ISHRS Fight the FIGHT Campaign

The ISHRS is concerned about the growing use of unlicensed technicians to perform hair restoration surgery worldwide — work that should only be done by a properly trained, licensed physician. When unlicensed technicians take on this role, patients face real risks: misdiagnosis, missed hair or systemic disorders, unnecessary surgery, and providers who may not even carry malpractice insurance.

Vulnerable patients are often lured by low prices, false advertising, and attractive medical tourism packages — only to end up at a clinic staffed by non-medical personnel with little to no training. The results can be serious: permanent scarring, infection, disfigurement, and little to no recourse for correction.

ISHRS believes the following should only be performed by a licensed physician:

- Preoperative diagnostic evaluation and consultation
- Surgery planning
- Donor hair harvesting, hairline design, and recipient site creation
- Management of other medical issues or adverse reactions
- Post-operative care

It's important to distinguish medical tourism from the black market. The black market is a network of rogue clinics, sometimes with one doctor present to mislead patients — facilitating illegal practices. Patients worldwide have suffered scarring, over-harvested donor areas, and irreversible results at these clinics.

Our goal is simple: help patients find experienced, ethical doctors before they choose surgery.





***Safe Hair Transplant
Surgery Starts Here***

You're Ready to Make the Right Decision

Find an ISHRS Doctor

[ISHRS.org/find-a-doctor](https://ishrs.org/find-a-doctor)

Read More Patient Case Studies

fightthefight.ishrs.org/patient-case-studies

