

August 2015

Caroline (age 53)

Lower Facelift / Necklift

Reflections on my experience with Dr. Lev . . .

Congratulations on making the hardest decision of all — the decision to invest in yourself through cosmetic surgery!

If you are still weighing the next choice: “At home or in Costa Rica?” perhaps I can help you.

Not long ago I, too, was on the fence about whether to travel or stay at home.

A friend of mine had cosmetic surgery with a respected surgeon in our hometown in the U.S. She had gotten outstanding results. Since I was interested in the same operation, I paid her doctor for a consultation. He studied my face, made an assessment, answered my questions and quoted a price. I then sent photos of myself to Dr. Lev who gave me the same assessment, and quoted a significantly lower price.

Both doctors had impeccable reputations. I felt I’d be in excellent hands either way. In the end, I chose Costa Rica, but it was NOT a financial decision.

Once I sat down with a calculator and added up airfare, hotel stay, food and extras, the dollar amounts were nearly identical.

Here’s what the same money bought:

In the U.S.

- Outpatient Surgery
- Follow ups with the doctor

In Costa Rica

- Airfare plus (pre surgery) luxury rainforest/ beach excursions including hotel stay, meals and tours.
- Transportation to medical appointments
- Inpatient surgery with a private nurse.
- Two weeks recovery in a private, luxury room at Verdeza including meals and amenities

The benefits? education and experience of international travel, going into surgery relaxed, not having to impose on friends and family, and a restful, pressure free recovery that allowed me a bit of “thinking time” at this pivotal point in my life.

Clearly, it isn’t wise to pinch pennies on surgery, but I think it’s wise to weigh all options. The best choice for me was having my surgery with Dr. Lev in Costa Rica.



BEFORE



14 DAYS AFTER

The Clinic or the Cima Hospital ?

I chose the clinic, and while I had a good overall experience, and an excellent outcome, my first impression of it was a bit jarring. If you are trying to make up your mind, my experience and perceptions might interest you.

Costa Rica is a developing country. This means it's a mixture of old and new. Opulent, internationally accredited state-of-the-art facilities are available and accessible: Verdeza, and the Cima Hospital are gleaming examples.

The clinic is on a different part of the spectrum. It's more old fashioned. If you go that route, you'll pay \$2000 less, and you'll get good care, but it will be a dramatically different experience – one that may take you out of your comfort level – at least at first.

For starters, the clinic is housed in an older building in a rougher neighborhood. Your cost savings will be reflected in everything from your level of privacy to the freshness of the paint on the walls.

That said, my nurses were attentive and excellent in every way, and the surgical procedures are done with the same level of expertise. I fared well there, but it was the single location on this journey where I felt initial a wave of initial apprehension due to my surroundings.

The other factor to consider is that in the unlikely event that something goes wrong at the clinic, you'll need to travel to the Cima hospital by ambulance.

If you are on the fence – particularly if you haven't traveled outside the U.S. -- I would urge you lean toward the Cima Hospital. I have no regrets about using the clinic, but if I ever come back again for surgery, I plan to pay extra for the more modern facility and all its amenities.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Whichever facility you choose, you MUST bring your passport in order to be admitted.

The photo on page 1 was taken at Verdeza today, 2 weeks post surgery. Full healing takes 6 months. Though I see a remarkable improvement, I still have a little swelling. A fully healed photo will follow in due time ...

Pura Vida!

