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Choosing an international hospital

What to look for when selecting an overseas hospital
for yourself or your family.



Internationally accredited since 2002,
the first JCI hospital in Asia.

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Bumrungrad
International



Bumrungrad
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Thailand:

The world's leading medical travel destination

Every year more and more people are traveling for healthcare. Overseas treatment can make an important operation affordable for some patients. For others, it is a way to get treatment sooner, or more comfortably, or by experts and technology not available back home.

The destination is the key. There are over 200 countries and thousands of hospitals in the world. Some offer excellent medical quality. Some offer substantial savings. Some have the services and experience to effectively serve international patients. You want one that offers all of these things. How will you find it?

Bumrungrad International in Bangkok, Thailand, is the world's most popular medical travel destination. We treat over 400,000 international patients each year from almost 200 countries. Following are four things we think you should look for in choosing where you or a family member should go if you're considering overseas treatment.




Medical quality and patient safety

Accreditation by the US-based Joint Commission International (JCI) is the best single guarantee that a hospital meets the quality and safety standards of good US hospitals. The JCI subjects hospitals to a thorough, one-week survey that examines everything from building safety and staff credentialing, to surgical and medication procedures, infection control, patient confidentiality and documentation. Bumrungrad was the first hospital in Asia accredited by the JCI, in 2002. Hospitals must be surveyed and re-accredited every three years.

The hospital and its home country should also have a trustworthy system to license and credential physicians. Bumrungrad's doctors are all licensed in their specialties by the Thai Medical Council. Our rigorous credentialing process requires regular, formal reviews of each doctor's qualifications and track record by the hospital's medical executives. Over 200 of our physicians are US board-certified or trained. The hospital and all Bumrungrad physicians carry full liability insurance.

The world's best hospitals track safety measures so they can learn and improve. At Bumrungrad we track over 60 indicators of clinical quality, outcomes, and patient safety, so we can compare ourselves to international benchmarks. We recently signed on to the International Quality Indicator Program (IQIP), an initiative to establish uniform medical quality metrics for world hospitals.

Quality measure	Benchmark	Source	 Bumrungrad International
Inpatient mortality	1.5%	Top 100 US hospitals	0.69%
Direct surgical mortality	0.35%	IQIP	0.07%
Unscheduled readmit within 15 days	2.8%	IQIP	1.4%
Surgical site infection % of surgeries	2-5%	CDC	0.39%
Medication errors per '000 items dispensed	3.8%*	IOM*	0.23
Patient Satisfaction Would you recommend to others?	67%	Hospital Compare.hhs.gov	87%

*no recent benchmark; however, an often-cited Institute Of Medicine study estimates one error per patient day
IQIP: International Quality Indicator Project
CDC: Center for Disease Control

Bumrungrad statistics are for 2007. Bumrungrad's patient base and characteristics differ in many ways with those of US hospitals. Benchmarks are intended as context for Bumrungrad's performance and should not be interpreted as like-vs-like comparisons.

Experience serving international patients

Many hospitals offer good doctors and modern technology, but do not have the experience to serve patients from different countries and cultures. In the past 10 years we treated over three million international patients. Here is what we've learned, and what you should look for:

- **Communication.** If providers can't speak your language it will be difficult for them to understand you, discuss your condition, and explain treatment. Bumrungrad employs over 100 interpreters. Virtually all our doctors speak English. Our multilingual contact center answers over 500 emails per day.
- **Convenience and comfort.** Surgery in a faraway place is less intimidating if the country knows how to take care of visitors and the hospital makes things easier for international patients. Thailand is a popular travel destination in part because it has a good tourism infrastructure and a culture famous for warm service. Bumrungrad adds special assistance like airport reception, full menus of Western, Middle Eastern and Asian food, serviced apartments on our campus for patients and their families, and help with visa extensions.
- **Medical coordination.** For anything more serious than a check-up, international patients need advice before they travel and arrangements for a safe trip home. Treatment records, including relevant lab tests and images, must be transferred to home-country providers who handle follow-up care. Some hospitals expect you to do this yourself or use a medical travel facilitator. Bumrungrad employs 25 doctors and nurses in a dedicated international medical coordination team. They are professional case managers experienced in both the needs of international patients and the resources of our hospital, and their service is provided free of charge.

Bumrungrad (pronounced Bahm-roong-RAHT) means "care for the people" in Thai.

We take the satisfaction of our international patients seriously, surveying thousands each year at the end of their hospital experience. Over 90% tell us they are satisfied and say they would recommend Bumrungrad to a friend or relative.



Value and transparency

Will the cost of the specific treatment provide sufficient savings to justify time and travel? Can you trust the hospital to do what's medically appropriate and be honest about its pricing?

Costs at Bumrungrad are a fraction of those in the US and many other countries. For eye, skin, and dental procedures, the difference may not by itself justify the trip. Along with check-ups, treatments like these may be worth considering as an add-on to a business or leisure trip. The procedures below have proven more interesting to prospective medical travelers.

Procedures (prices are in USD)	US ¹	Bumrungrad International ²	% VARIANCE Bumrungrad vs US	Bumrungrad + travel estimate ³	% VARIANCE Bumrungrad + travel vs US
Heart bypass	130,000	24,600	-81%	28,500	-78%
PTCA (balloon angioplasty)	57,000	13,100	-77%	17,000	-70%
Total hip replacement	43,000	13,000	-70%	16,900	-61%
Total knee replacement	40,000	12,100	-70%	16,000	-60%
Microdiscectomy	25,000	7,100	-72%	11,000	-56%
Spinal fusion	62,000	10,000	-84%	13,900	-78%
Gastric bypass	25,000	17,000	-32%	20,900	-16%
Prostate surgery (TURP)	13,000	6,100	-53%	10,000	-23%
Vaginal hysterectomy	20,000	4,300	-79%	8,200	-59%

1. Estimates obtained from various sources, including the Medical Tourism Association (2007 Survey), Patients Beyond Borders (2nd edition), and patient support organisations. Large insurers or Third Party Payor groups may be able to negotiate discounts in excess of 30%.
2. Prices are estimates, including doctors' fees, based on actual patient invoices from 2008.
3. Price estimate inclusive of round-trip economy class airfare, and living costs (accommodation, meals, laundry) for two weeks post-procedure recuperation in Bangkok.

Bumrungrad is very transparent in its pricing, offering a unique service named REALCOST that shows the actual total bill our patients paid for 45 procedures. It is available online at www.bumrungrad.com/realcost Bumrungrad has over 28 years of experience in processing international medical claims from some 130 multinational insurance companies and over 1,000 corporate contracts. The Utilization Review team of physicians and nurses insures that care is efficient and medically appropriate, evidenced by an average length stay of less than four days in a tertiary hospital.

Capacity

Does the hospital have the capacity and infrastructure to efficiently handle more patients? If you are an individual, this question may be answered by the way the hospital responds to your request for an appointment.

In most cases, the vast majority of patients served by the hospital will be those in its local market. Is it equipped to handle a large additional load from abroad?

Bumrungrad serves an average of 3,000 patients per day. Some 1,200 per day are internationals. The average waiting time to see a doctor is under 30 minutes.




The new Bumrungrad International Clinic is the largest private outpatient clinic in the world. It will double our capacity to over 6,000 patients per day.

More resources to help with your decision

The checklist on the facing page summarizes what we think you should look for in an international hospital. It is a demanding list, but providing overseas healthcare is a serious undertaking. Two good sources for international hospitals worth considering are the Joint Commission’s list at www.jointcommissioninternational.org and the new edition of Josef Woodman’s book *Patients Beyond Borders*.

You can start with one hospital that provides all of these: Bumrungrad International, called one of the world’s top 10 medical destinations by *Newsweek*.

Checklist for choosing an international hospital

	 Bumrungrad International	Hospital B	Hospital C
QUALITY & SAFETY			
Joint Commission accreditation	Since 2002		
Doctors licensed and certified in their specialties by independent country medical authority	•		
Modern technology, diagnostic, and surgical techniques	• <small>(e.g. PET/CT, MRI, digital mammography, HDR brachytherapy)</small>		
Facility conforms to US hospital (NFPA) fire and safety standards	•		
Key safety statistics available; comparable or better than US hospitals	•		
Hospital and physicians fully insured	•		
COMMUNICATION			
Website providing information, doctor search, inquiry and appointment requests	•		
Contact/referral center; emails answered in English within 48 hours	•		
English-speaking case management for international patients	25 dedicated doctors/nurses		
English-speaking physicians and interpreters	1000+ doctors 100+ interpreters		
Patient medical records kept confidential	•		
ACCESSIBILITY & COMFORT			
Capacity for appointments, tests, procedures	Most can be scheduled within 1-4 days		
Airport reception desk and team capable of helping patients with special needs	•		
Convenient transfer from international airport	Modern freeway; avg. 30 minutes		
Clean, comfortable hotel rooms within walking distance of hospital	•		
Choice of menus, including familiar dishes	•		
VALUE & TRANSPARENCY			
Cost of care vs. US	70-85% less		
Cost air travel, food and lodging	RT economy approx. \$1,300; food & lodging \$150-\$250/day		
Hospital provides transparent cost guidelines and estimates in advance	•		
Hospital has utilization review to insure medically appropriate & efficient care	•		
EXPERIENCE			
Experience serving international patients	Over 3 million treated since 1998		
Experience contracting with multinational insurers	•		