NEWS LESSON

Why the Flight Home Is Not the End



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Would you travel abroad for a service that cost less?
2. What makes you trust a clinic's before-and-after photos?
3. How much should appearance matter in how someone feels about themselves?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**scalp**	☐	A	the tiny parts of the skin that hair grows from
2	**dressings**	☐	B	easy to know or identify
3	**follicles**	☐	C	a worried feeling that you are not good enough
4	**scarring**	☐	D	the skin on the top of your head
5	**follow-up**	☐	E	permanent marks left on the skin after a wound
6	**recognisable**	☐	F	looking or seeming young
7	**insecurity**	☐	G	happening later to check or continue something
8	**youthful**	☐	H	clean material that covers a wound or cut

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

Istanbul clinics sell the surgery, a hotel and the transfers in one package. The scalp still needs months to heal, and some patients need a second session.

1 Istanbul has become one of the world's most recognisable destinations for hair transplantation. Travellers arrive for a medical procedure and return home a few days later, sometimes still wearing visible dressings. The growing industry brings together lower prices, cheap international travel and the modern pressure to maintain a youthful appearance.

2 A hair transplant involves moving hair follicles from an area where hair is still growing to a part of the scalp affected by hair loss. The procedure requires medical expertise and careful planning. Although many patients end up satisfied with their results, the new hairline takes months to develop, and surgery cannot guarantee the appearance somebody has pictured in advance.

3 Cost is a major attraction. Clinics in Istanbul may charge substantially less than comparable providers in western Europe or North America. Some businesses make the process easier for international customers by including accommodation and local transport in their packages, which has turned the procedure into a recognisable form of medical tourism.

4 Price, however, is not the same as quality. Patients should look into who will perform the operation, what professional qualifications they hold and how complications would be managed. Infections, scarring and unsatisfactory results are among the risks. The possibility of needing follow-up treatment matters particularly when the clinic is in another country and the patient has already flown home.

5 Advertising deserves a degree of caution too. Reporting in March 2026 described Istanbul as the centre of this trade. Clinics compete for international customers through social media, before-and-after photographs and prices that can look remarkable at first glance. It is worth asking exactly what a package price includes. A package that seems too good to be true may turn out to be a false economy if it covers the operation but little of the care that should surround it.

6 Recovery also takes longer than a short trip abroad suggests. The scalp needs time to heal, the transplanted hair comes through slowly over the following months, and some patients need a second session before they see the result they hoped for. Anyone booking a few days away should understand that the flight home is the beginning of the process rather than the end of it.

7 There is also a social dimension to the boom. Hair loss can affect confidence, and photographs on social media may increase the pressure to look younger. At the same time, plenty of people are happy with their changing appearance and reject the idea that baldness is a problem needing medical correction.

8 Turkey's hair-transplant industry sits at the meeting point of personal choice and commercial persuasion. Its popularity does not make the procedure right or wrong for anybody in particular. The challenge is separating a carefully considered medical decision from an impulsive response to advertising or insecurity.

Sources: The Guardian. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. Needing follow-up treatment is a bigger concern when the clinic is in another country. T F NG
2. The writer says transplanted hair appears within a few days of the operation. T F NG
3. Clinics in Istanbul employ more surgeons than clinics in western Europe. T F NG
4. The writer accepts that being happy with baldness is a reasonable attitude. T F NG
5. The writer says a package price that includes the operation always includes proper aftercare. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

accommodation	comparable	complications	expertise	persuasion	remarkable
substantially	unsatisfactory				

1. Package deals that include _____ and local transport make it easier for visitors from abroad.
2. A procedure like this requires considerable medical _____ and years of training.
3. Every operation carries some risk of _____ , so doctors must be ready to deal with problems.
4. She asked for a refund because the result was _____ and not what she had been promised.
5. Her recovery was _____ : she was back at work within a week, which surprised even her surgeon.
6. Treatment abroad can cost _____ less than the same operation at home, sometimes by thousands of pounds.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. By the time the patient landed back home, the clinic _____ a list of aftercare instructions to her doctor. (SEND)
2. Istanbul _____ one of the world's best-known destinations for hair transplants. (BECOME)
3. Many packages _____ to international customers through social media. (ADVERTISE)
4. Transplanted hair usually _____ through slowly, so patients must be patient. (COME)
5. She wouldn't have flown to Istanbul if the price at home _____ so high. (NOT BE)

7 Language focus: phrasal verbs

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. The small word often carries the meaning: out can mean 'calculate' or 'discover', and up can mean 'arrive' or 'appear'. Check that the verb and particle make sense together.

bring	carry	cut	hand	put	turn	work

1. Many people _____ off the decision because they fear choosing the wrong clinic.
2. A good surgeon will _____ on seeing the patient until the scalp has healed.
3. Cheap flights and package deals can _____ about a rise in medical tourism.
4. It is sensible to _____ out the total cost, including flights and the hotel.
5. Some patients _____ up at the clinic without having asked a single question.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. What would you want to know beyond the headline price?
2. When does a cosmetic choice become pressure to look a certain way?
3. Should the support after a procedure matter as much as the procedure itself?

9 Role-play: is the cheap package worth it?

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the friend

Your friend wants to fly to Istanbul for a hair transplant because it's much cheaper. You're worried. Ask about the clinic, the surgeon and the help after the operation. Say what you'd do.

Student B · the traveller

You've found a cheap package in Istanbul with a hotel and airport transfers. You want to book it this week. Explain why it's a good deal and answer your friend's worries.

Useful phrases

I've found a much cheaper package in Istanbul.

What happens if something goes wrong when I'm home?

Have you checked the surgeon's qualifications?

I'd feel safer if we shopped around first.

I'm not trying to push you into it.

Could we compromise and wait a month?

Afterwards, tell the class: did the traveller decide to book, wait or look for another clinic?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 D · 2 H · 3 A · 4 E · 5 G · 6 B · 7 C · 8 F

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 NG · 4 T · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 accommodation · 2 expertise · 3 complications · 4 unsatisfactory · 5 remarkable · 6 substantially

6 Verb forms

1 had sent · 2 has become · 3 are advertised · 4 comes · 5 hadn't been or had not been

7 Language focus

1 put · 2 carry · 3 bring · 4 work · 5 turn

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