

In the News

A study by scientists at the Gladstone Institutes of Cardiovascular Disease (GICD) published in February has found that an enzyme associated with the synthesis of fat in the body is also an element in healthy skin and hair. For more information, see sciencedaily.com.

Understanding Hair Restoration Costs

It is wise for cosmetic surgery patients to obtain a second opinion before undergoing any procedure. With all other things being equal, price can play a significant factor in patient choices for surgery. When comparing prices for [hair loss treatment](#), it is imperative to ensure that a patient is comparing apples to apples.

There are many pricing structures used for hair restoration surgery and understanding them can make comparing procedure prices much easier. The current state of the art in hair restoration surgery is termed follicular unit grafting. Though there are different methods for harvesting the donor hair, the procedure basically comes down to harvesting hair from the side and back of the head, dividing the donor hair into individual grafts, and placing these grafts in the recipient area.

Two terms must be understood to compare pricing structures: grafts and follicles. The follicle refers to the individual hair and associated structures. This corresponds to one hair. Graft is the unit which is placed in the recipient site. This can consist of one or more follicles. Most surgeons will use individual follicle grafts along the edge of the hairline and multi-follicle grafts in other areas. Some surgeons though will use single follicle grafts through the entire transplanted area. Even though two surgeons report that they will use the same number of grafts, because of differing follicles in each graft, the total number of hairs transplanted may be vastly different. When getting an estimate of cost and size of the transplant, it is important to get not only number of grafts but also number of hairs which will be transplanted. Surgeon A may transplant 1,000 single follicle grafts for \$2000 whereas surgeon B may transplant 1,000 multi unit grafts for \$3000. Surgeon A will transplant less total hair and possibly for a higher per hair cost than surgeon B. In this case, comparing surgeon A to surgeon B based solely on number of grafts would be misleading.

Some patients with significant hair loss may require multiple hair transplant sessions to obtain their desired results. Studies have shown that the longer the time out of the body, the less the survival rate of the transplanted hairs. Multiple shorter sessions may be more beneficial than a single prolonged session not only for graft survival but for patient comfort. Some physicians will charge by the session while others will charge for the number of grafts obtained while others may charge a combination of the two. When determining cost for multiple sessions, it is important to obtain the total cost for all sessions. If surgeon A charges \$5000 per session and thinks it will take two sessions while surgeon B charges \$3 per graft regardless of the number of sessions, surgeon B will need to place over 3,000 grafts in 2 sessions to meet surgeon A's prices. Patients are urged to obtain an estimate of the total cost based on a per hair, not per graft, basis to allow for comparison.

In order to compare one surgeon to another when considering hair transplant surgery, obtain a cost estimate based on a total number of hairs transplanted. Though exact numbers of transplants will depend on the number of hairs obtained from the donor area, most hair restoration surgeons can estimate the number of hairs needed for a transplant and the approximate cost involved. The best comparison is made with a price per hair estimate. To determine the price per hair, simply divide the estimate for the total cost by the total number of hairs to be transplanted. If the estimate is given as a price per graft, be sure to ask how many hairs are transplanted per graft.

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