



Rhinoplasty

Each year thousands of people undergo surgery of the nose. Nasal surgery may be performed for cosmetic purposes, or a combination procedure to improve both form and function. It also may alleviate or cure nasal breathing problems, correct deformities from birth or injury, or support an aging, drooping nose.

Patients who are considering nasal surgery for any reason should seek a doctor who is a specialist in nasal airway function, as well as plastic surgery. This will ensure that efficient breathing is as high a priority as appearance.

Aesthetic nasal surgery (rhinoplasty) refines the shape of the nose, bringing it into balance with the other features of the face. Because the nose is the most prominent facial feature, even a slight alteration can greatly improve appearance. (Some patients elect chin augmentation in conjunction with rhinoplasty to better balance their features.) Rhinoplasty alone cannot give you a perfect profile, make you look like someone else, or improve your personal life. Before surgery, it is very important that the patient have a clear, realistic understanding of what change is possible, as well as the limitations and risks of the procedure.

Skin type, ethnic background, and age will be among the factors considered preoperatively by the surgeon. Except in cases of severe breathing impairment, young patients usually are not candidates until their noses are fully grown, at 15 or 16 years old. The surgeon will also discuss risk factors, which are generally minor, as well as where the surgery will be performed - in a hospital, freestanding outpatient surgical center, or a certified office operating room.

To reshape the nose, the skin is lifted, allowing the surgeon to remove or rearrange the bone and cartilage. The skin is then redraped and sutured over the new frame. A nasal splint on the outside of the nose helps retain the new shape during healing. If soft, absorbent material is placed inside the nose to stabilize the septum, it will normally be removed the morning after surgery. External nasal dressings and splints are usually removed five to seven days after surgery.

Otolaryngologist – head and neck surgeons can provide a complete evaluation and treatment options regarding rhinoplasty. An otolaryngologist can receive up to 15 years of college and post-graduate training in plastic surgery, concentrating on procedures that reconstruct the elements of the face. Because they study the complex anatomy, physiology, and pathology of the entire head and neck, these specialists (sometimes called ENTs) are uniquely qualified to perform the procedures that affect the whole face.

For more information or to find a head and neck surgeon near you, visit www.entnet.org.