

Rhinoplasty

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This is an operation to correct cosmetic features and if indicated, the function of your nose. A rhinoplasty is one of the most difficult cosmetic procedures to undertake and requires an understanding of the function and anatomy of the nose.

Amongst the many features of the nose to address are the septum (middle strut), the dorsum (or top) as well as the shape of the tip of the nose. Less commonly the lining of your nose (mucosa) and your sinuses may require surgical attention as well. The skeleton of the nose is composed of both cartilage and bone both of which have to be sculpted to obtain the ideal result.

The best candidates for a rhinoplasty are those who have realistic expectations of what is achievable. The surgery will depend on an assessment of your nasal symptoms and anatomical features. This requires an accurate knowledge of the effect of the function and anatomy of your nose to produce a desirable outcome. Accurate photo documentation will take place preoperatively. Almost invariably, 'alter image' software will be utilised to demonstrate a proposed end result of surgery and will be stored to compare with the postoperative result. This is an important step in understanding what is possible, and digital manipulation of photographs provides a central point for discussion preoperatively. Details of anaesthesia and the postoperative course will also be discussed. An account of medications and your past medical history will be obtained during the preoperative interview. Certain medications (most notably aspirin, other anticoagulants and herbal remedies) must be avoided preoperatively. Smoking in particular adversely affects wound healing.

Surgery takes place under general anaesthetic and the procedure takes at least two hours and it frequently may take longer than this. There are two basic methods of undertaking surgery – the 'open' or 'closed' methods. The former method includes an incision through the columella to facilitate lifting of the skin from the top of your nose. The 'closed' method utilises incisions which are placed entirely on the inside of the nose. The 'open' method may be preferred as a better appreciation of the structure and skeleton of the nose is obtained. At the completion of surgery, paper tape is applied to the dorsum of your nose and this may be covered by a splint.

Very little pain should be experienced and any facial swelling and bruising will be maximal within the first 48-72 hours, especially if the bony skeleton of your nose warrants surgery. A little bloodstained discharge from your nose is common but that should reduce over the first few days. It is very uncommon to require the insertion of nasal packing following nasal surgery of this nature. You will be able to return to your normal activities within a short period of time but strenuous exercise should be avoided for at least ten days following surgery. The initial post-operative check will take place at approximately five to seven days following surgery, but note:

- It is impossible to guarantee surgical results with this type of cosmetic procedure and the digital manipulation of your image undertaken preoperatively is used as a guide only. Results cannot always be guaranteed and a small percentage (fewer than 10%) of patients will require revision surgery.
- Pain is usually mild and can be controlled using simple analgesics (not aspirin as this may promote postoperative bleeding).
- Bruising around the eyes is very common and may take 7-10 days to settle.
- Avoid excessive sun exposure following surgery.
- Avoid excessive pressure over the top of your nose following surgery.
- By the end of six weeks, the result of surgery is reasonably stable.

