

Plastic Surgery of the Nose (Rhinoplasty)

This brochure will familiarize you with some basic facts about cosmetic and functional surgery of the nose. It will give you enough general background to make you an "educated consumer" about plastic surgery of the nose. Your facial plastic surgeon will explain how these procedures apply to an individual's condition.

COMMON PROBLEMS AND THEIR SOLUTIONS

A hump on top of the nose, a nose that is too long or too wide, a nose that is deformed through injury or because of birth defects, obstructions in the nose that cause breathing and sinus problems and headaches are external and internal conditions of the nose that can be corrected by plastic surgery.

Rhinoplasty is the name of the operation that corrects deformities of the external nose. In a rhinoplasty, incisions are placed just in-side the rim of the nostrils. Occasionally, a very short incision across the skin between the nostrils is required also. The soft tissues of the nose are then carefully separated from the underlying cartilage and bone. The offending structures are removed, and the remaining cartilage and bones are reshaped.

Rhinoplasty can be performed in conjunction with reconstructive nasal-septal surgery to relieve obstructions inside the nose. When this is done, the operation is called a *septorhinoplasty*. In a septorhinoplasty, the obstruction is removed through internal incisions and the interior of the nose is restructured.

A small splint is usually placed on the external nose for a few days and a light internal dressing may be applied.

These procedures usually last one to two hours, depending on the amount of work that must be done.

DECIDING ON AN OPERATION

Anyone interested in cosmetic or functional surgery of the nose should consult a competent facial plastic surgeon. During the initial visit, the surgeon makes a thorough evaluation of the external and internal shape of an individual's nose to determine whether surgery is indicated. He will then discuss any questions and concerns related to the surgery.

In addition to the skill of the surgeon, the patient's realistic expectations about the results of the surgery and his general emotional state are important considerations. Mental attitude is as important as the ability to heal in evaluating candidates for facial plastic surgery.

Once surgery is agreed upon, pre-operative photographs are taken to help the surgeon plan the operation. These photographs usually are compared with similar ones taken sometime after surgery and serve as a permanent before-and-after record of the results.

WHERE SURGERY IS PERFORMED

The operation can be performed in a hospital, an ambulatory surgical care center or an office surgery center, depending on the patient's and the physician's preference. It can be

performed safely on an out-patient basis, but the physician may recommend a short stay in the hospital.

KEEPING THE PATIENT COMFORTABLE

Pre-operative medications to relieve tension and local anesthetics to numb the nose during surgery commonly are administered. These should keep the patient comfortable and free of pain. If desired, general anesthesia can be administered.

THE IMMEDIATE AFTER-EFFECTS

After the operation, some swelling and bruising of the nose and eyelids can be expected. The swelling usually subsides within the first few days, and the bruising subsides within a couple of weeks. There may be mild discomfort for a short time after surgery, but this usually is controlled easily with medication. Significant pain is quite rare.

THE RESULTS TO EXPECT

Significant improvement may be noticed as soon as the splint is removed from the nose. Several weeks to several months must pass, though, before the final result can be seen. Just how much improvement will occur depends on the individual's physical characteristics and the extent of surgery.

THE RISKS

The risks are minimal. There are inherent risks in any surgical undertaking, however, and these should be discussed thoroughly with your facial plastic surgeon. Many thousands of nasal operations are performed successfully each year.

THE COSTS

Fees for cosmetic surgery and operative facilities vary widely and depend on the extent and complexity of the surgery as well as on the individual surgeon. Your facial plastic surgeon and his staff will discuss costs before the operation. Fees for cosmetic surgery generally are expected in advance of surgery because this type of surgery usually is not covered by insurance. If the purpose of cosmetic surgery is to correct functional impairment, an insurance company may allow partial payment. The best way to find out if a claim will be considered is to consult an insurance company representative in advance of the operation. Whatever medical expense related to cosmetic surgery that the insurance does not cover may be taken as an itemized income tax deduction.

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The American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (AAFPRS), is the world's largest association of facial plastic surgeons-those physicians performing cosmetic and reconstructive surgery of the face, head, and neck. The Academy's bylaws provide that AAFPRS fellows be board-certified surgeons with training and experience in facial plastic surgery and be fellows of the American College of Surgeons or the Royal college of Surgeons.

*Persons contemplating facial plastic surgery can receive information about such surgery and the name of AAFPRS fellows in their area who have chosen to participate in the Facial Plastic Surgery Information Service, Inc, by calling that service at 800-332-FACE (in the U.S.), 800-523-FACE (in Canada), 842-4500 (in Washington, D.C).
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