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Patient Information Leaflet

Nasal Surgery (Rhinoplasty)

Introduction

Corrective nasal surgery, commonly known as **rhinoplasty**, is one of the most frequently performed cosmetic surgical procedures worldwide.

Rhinoplasty may be performed to:

- Improve nasal appearance
- Correct deformities following injury
- Improve breathing function
- Address developmental or familial nasal characteristics

Modern surgical techniques allow for more refined, natural, and predictable outcomes than were possible in previous decades.

The goal of rhinoplasty is not to create a completely different nose, but rather to achieve a nose that is harmonious with the patient's facial features while maintaining normal function.

Who is a Suitable Candidate?

Suitability for rhinoplasty depends not only on physical development, but also emotional maturity and realistic expectations.

In younger patients, surgery may occasionally be considered before full adulthood if:

- Facial growth is largely complete
- The patient experiences significant emotional distress or self-consciousness regarding nasal appearance
- The patient demonstrates sufficient maturity and understanding of the procedure

In other cases, surgery may be postponed until further physical and emotional development has occurred.

There is generally no upper age limit for rhinoplasty, provided the patient is in good overall health.

Rhinoplasty may also be performed in conjunction with other facial rejuvenation procedures in older patients.

Understanding Nasal Anatomy

The shape of the nose is determined by:

- Bone
- Cartilage
- Skin thickness
- Soft tissue support

Rhinoplasty involves carefully modifying these structures by:

- Removing
- Reshaping
- Repositioning
- Refining

the underlying bone and cartilage framework.

The skin then redrapes over the new structure to create the final contour.

Most rhinoplasty procedures are performed through incisions hidden inside the nose. In some cases, a small external incision between the nostrils or near the base of the nose may be required. These scars usually heal extremely well and become minimally visible over time.

Skin Thickness and Surgical Limitations

Skin quality and thickness significantly influence the final result.

- Thin skin tends to reveal fine contour details more easily
- Thick skin may limit the degree of visible refinement achievable

In addition, the internal nasal structures must be preserved sufficiently to maintain proper airflow and breathing function.

The aim of surgery is therefore to achieve a delicate balance between:

- Aesthetic refinement
 - Structural support
 - Functional breathing
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Surgical Goals

An experienced plastic surgeon evaluates the nose in relation to the entire face, including:

- Chin projection
- Lip position
- Facial proportions
- Ethnic characteristics

Patients are encouraged to communicate their concerns and aesthetic goals. However, expectations must remain realistic and compatible with the patient's anatomy.

The goal is usually:

- Correction of major deformities
- Improvement of contour
- Subtle refinement
- Preservation of natural facial harmony

Overly aggressive or unnatural changes are generally avoided.

Pre-Operative Planning

Clinical photographs are taken before surgery to:

- Assist surgical planning
- Evaluate facial balance
- Provide a permanent medical record

These photographs help assess the relationship between the nose and surrounding facial structures.

The Operation

Rhinoplasty is usually performed under **general anaesthesia**.

During surgery:

- Bone and cartilage are reshaped
- Deviations may be corrected
- Nasal support structures refined
- Breathing passages preserved where possible

At the end of the operation:

- Small internal dressings or packing may be placed temporarily
- An external nasal splint is applied to protect the nose and minimise swelling

The procedure typically causes surprisingly little discomfort after the first 24 hours.

Recovery

You will usually remain in hospital for approximately **two days**.

Typical recovery includes:

- Bruising and swelling around the eyes during the first week
- Nasal swelling that gradually improves over 10–14 days
- Mild nasal congestion while internal swelling settles

Most patients are able to return to normal daily activities after approximately **7–10 days**.

The external splint is usually removed after approximately one week.

Long-Term Healing

Some swelling, particularly in the nasal tip, may persist for several months.

The nose continues to refine gradually over time, and:

- Final contour changes may take up to **12 months**
- Nasal tip firmness and numbness gradually improve
- Subtle changes continue long after early swelling has resolved

Patients should avoid judging the final result too early in the healing process.

Risks and Possible Complications

All surgical procedures carry some degree of risk.

Specific risks associated with rhinoplasty may include:

- Bleeding
- Infection
- Delayed healing
- Swelling
- Bruising
- Temporary nasal obstruction
- Numbness
- Contour irregularities
- Asymmetry
- Persistent deformity
- Need for revision surgery

Minor contour irregularities are sometimes noticeable to the patient and surgeon but may not be apparent to others.

Post-operative bleeding may occasionally occur, particularly during the first week after surgery or following removal of nasal packing.

Serious complications are uncommon.

Revision Surgery

Although every effort is made to achieve the desired result during the initial procedure, healing patterns vary between individuals.

Occasionally, minor irregularities or asymmetries may persist and require secondary refinement surgery.

This does not necessarily indicate poor surgical technique, but rather reflects the complexity and variability of healing in nasal surgery.

Important Considerations

Patients should understand that:

- Improvement, not perfection, is the goal
- Healing is gradual
- Swelling may temporarily distort early appearance
- Subtle refinements become more visible with time
- Final results require patience

Post-operative instructions will be provided and should be followed carefully to minimise the risk of injury or distortion during healing.

Final Notes

Rhinoplasty can significantly improve facial harmony, confidence, and nasal function when carefully planned and performed.

Successful rhinoplasty depends upon:

- Realistic expectations
- Careful surgical judgment
- Respect for normal anatomy
- Patience during healing

The overall aim is always to achieve a natural, balanced, and harmonious result while preserving healthy breathing function.