

## What is Rhinoplasty?

Rhinoplasty is an operation to change the shape of the nose. The type of rhinoplasty depends on which particular area of the nose needs correction. The nose can be straightened, made smaller or bigger and bumps may be removed. The shape of the tip of the nose can be changed. Pieces of cartilage or bone may be removed from or added to the nose to change its shape. Sometimes the wall that separates the nose into right and left (nasal septum) is twisted. We may need to correct it at the same time. The combined operation is called septorhinoplasty.

### The Procedure

Rhinoplasty surgery employs reduction, augmentation or refinement of the patient's nose to give a balanced and proportioned nose. Reduction rhinoplasty commonly involves the removal of a nasal hump along with re-breaking the nose to reduce the width.

The tip of the nose may be asymmetrical, depressed or the nose itself may need building up. Augmentation with can be achieved using tissue moved from another part of the patient's body such as skin or cartilage from the ear or rib. Alternatively synthetic material can be used (gortex, silastic) but there is a greater risk of rejection or infection.

Approaches for the surgery can be either through the nostrils (intranasal) or by the use of a small incision on the under side of the nose (external).

Photographs will be taken to allow a record to be kept in your notes of how your nose looked before surgery, and to allow the surgeon to plan your operation. Rhinoplasty and septorhinoplasty are usually performed with you asleep. Cuts are made inside your nose. Occasionally a small cut on the skin between the nostrils or at the base of the nostrils may be necessary. The skin of your nose is gently lifted off the bone and cartilage underneath. A hairline fracture may be made in the nasal bones to allow the surgeon to change the shape of the nose. Pieces of bone and cartilage can be removed from or added to the nose to smooth out any bumps or dips.

We may need to put a dressing in each side of your nose to keep things in place and prevent bleeding. The dressings are called 'packs', and they will block your nose up so that you have to breathe through your mouth. We may take them out the morning after your operation. You may get a little bit of bleeding when the packs come out – this will settle quickly. Sometimes we put small pieces of plastic in your nose to prevent scar tissue from forming. These are called 'splints' and we will take them out after a week. You will have a temporary splint on the outside of the nose for a week. This should be kept dry.

### After the surgery

The front of your nose can be a bit tender for a few weeks.

Do not blow your nose for about a week, or it might start bleeding. If you are going to sneeze, sneeze with your mouth open to protect your nose. You may get some blood-coloured watery fluid from your nose for the first two weeks or so – this is normal. Your nose will be blocked both sides like a heavy cold for 10-14 days after the operation. We may give you some drops or spray to help this. It may take up to three months for your nose to settle down and for your breathing to be clear again. Try to stay away from dusty or smoky places.

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There will be some stitches inside your nose – these will dissolve and fall out by themselves. You may have some bruising and swelling around your nose and eyes for one to two weeks. Sleeping upright with extra pillows for a few days helps. Most of the swelling will have subsided after two weeks but it may be longer before the skin and soft tissues over the bone and cartilage settle. Fine swelling may take up to a year to settle at which time the final results of surgery may be judged.

Following rhinoplasty or septorhinoplasty, the skin of the nose is very sensitive to the sun. It is important to wear strong sunscreen and a hat for at least six months. The nose may feel a little stiff and numb for up to three months, particularly around the tip.

You can expect to go home the day after your operation. Sometimes it is possible to go home the same day. You should rest at home for at least a week. Most people need one to two weeks off work, especially if their work involves heavy lifting or strenuous activity. You should not play sports where there is a risk of your nose being knocked for six weeks. Ask your nurse if you need a sick note for your time in hospital.