



nose

nasal surgery

Q&A

Sydney cosmetic surgeon **Dr William Mooney** provides the answers to some of the most common questions asked by patients contemplating a rhinoplasty procedure. Christine Doggett reports.

Nothing has a greater impact on how a person looks than the size and shape of the nose. Rhinoplasty is a surgical procedure that refines a nose's size and shape and can improve obstructed breathing. The goal of rhinoplasty is to create a natural, unoperated look, so that the nose fits in harmoniously with the other facial features and functions normally.

Optimum results require patience and a commitment to the patient by a surgeon from the first consultation through to post-operative care and excellent communication throughout. Over the years, Sydney cosmetic surgeon Dr William Mooney has found that both male and female patients have common concerns when contemplating surgery to the nose.

Q Is it possible to fix breathing problems and the appearance of the nose at the same time?

A Most patients seeking rhinoplasty have a combination of cosmetic and functional concerns. The nose is not only the aesthetic centre of the face but also has several important functions, such as smell, sinus function and breathing. The majority of patients with perceived cosmetic problems also have a degree of functional impairment they would like to improve. At the time of consultation, both the aesthetic quality of the nose is assessed along with the flow of breath and function of the sinuses. While patients often assess themselves aesthetically several times a day, respiration is taking place all day every day. The function of the nose can be improved at the same time as its appearance.

Q Does treating functional problems complicate recovery?

A The kinds of problems concerning patients include snoring, sinusitis, nasal obstruction, sinus headaches and changes in the sense of smell. Generally these problems can be treated while the nose is being refined, and the procedures do not add significantly to recovery time.



Q How do I choose the right nose for me?

A The planning process is very important. Factors to be taken into consideration are the age and gender of the patient, his or her ethnicity, occupation and personality. All play a role in selecting the shape and size of the 'new' nose so that it is in harmony with the other facial features.

For example, a female of Mediterranean background with olive skin requires a more dramatic nose, rather than a cute up-turned button nose, to fit with her other features. Likewise, a 'too-pretty' nose does not fit well on the face of an Australian male.

Several consultations are needed before surgery in order to plan the exact outcome for the surgeon and the patient. Time is taken to consider the possibilities using the latest computer imaging technology to modify digital photographs of a patient's face on screen. This is an excellent tool to discuss planned outcomes and patients are often amazed by the difference that their projected nose surgery can make to their overall appearance. There is no specific 'right' nose, but a right nose that's specific to each patient.

Q What does the surgery entail?

A Surgery naturally provokes some anxiety but great care is taken to alleviate nervousness and the whole operation is planned with full attention to detail.

Rhinoplasty is performed under a general anaesthetic and takes around two hours. When patients wake up, they are often surprised that pain isn't a big feature but in spite of pre-operative techniques to reduce bruising they may still have black eyes. Patients spend one night in hospital and can go home the next day. The plaster is removed at seven days, and the patient can return to work after 10 to

14 days. After two weeks patients usually look completely normal but the final result can take a few months.

Q Can other procedures be undertaken at the same time?

A Obviously functional improvements to the nose are performed at the same time as the aesthetic improvements. It is increasingly the norm to undertake other procedures at the same time, such as rejuvenating injectable anti-ageing treatments like Botox and dermal fillers. Chin modification and cheek implant surgery to balance the facial profile are also commonly undertaken concurrently.

Again, computer imaging assists in projecting the final outcome. Rhinoplasty can also be performed at the same time as a facelift or blepharoplasty, with the advantage of only one recovery period.

Q Am I too old (or too young) to have a rhinoplasty procedure?

A This is a very important question. A rhinoplasty is best performed after the face has stopped growing. In females, growth stops at around 16 or 17 years of age and in males a little later at 18 or 19 years. This may vary, but it is important to be sure that the patient's face has matured. In older patients, nose abnormalities worsen as they age. The cartilage at the end of the nose continues to grow and the subcutaneous fat in the face diminishes as we age. Consequently, the nose can look bigger and more crooked. More patients in their 40s and 50s are considering rhinoplasty to solve cosmetic and functional nasal problems but, whatever a patient's age, it is important that he or she understands the procedure and its outcomes. **acsm**

Case study 1

This patient was concerned about the appearance of her nose, as well as recurrent sinusitis. Dr Mooney performed open-structure rhinoplasty, septoplasty (straightening of the partition between the nostrils) and sinus surgery. Post-operatively she has a clear airway, no sinusitis and a more dynamic nose that creates facial harmony.



BEFORE

AFTER

Case study 2

This 26-year-old nurse had significant breathing difficulty, which was worse at night and affected her exercise tolerance. She also had concerns about the dorsal hump on her nose and its overall size. She was treated with open-structure septorhinoplasty and is now delighted with the functional and cosmetic outcome.



BEFORE

AFTER