



nose

# THE INS AND OUTS OF RHINOPLASTY

SYDNEY ENT AND FACIAL PLASTIC SURGEON **DR WILLIAM MOONEY** DISCUSSES THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE RHINOPLASTY PROCEDURE AND ACHIEVING YOUR DESIRED NOSE.

The decision to consider rhinoplasty – a ‘nose job’ – can be daunting. Results from an internet search can be misleading and generate anxiety about the outcome. However, a carefully planned rhinoplasty performed by an experienced surgeon can produce an excellent functional and cosmetic improvement.

The nose is the axis of the face – a static centrepiece around which all the dynamic features take anchor. Variations in the contour of the nose have a strong yet subtle effect on the entire facial appearance. Look at your nose in a mirror. By pushing it up just one millimetre it instantly makes your nose look ‘piggy’; a similar millimetre of depression makes your nose look hooked and ‘witchy’. This gives you an idea of the accuracy that planning and surgery involves to achieve optimal results.

Cosmetic nasal surgery therefore starts with a thorough assessment. We look at the shape of your nose, from front on, lateral, oblique and inferior views. The shape of your face and skin type is also important. General features such as age, sex, ethnicity and then height and body type also weigh in to the decision-making process. Even your occupation, posture and personality play roles in planning the best nasal contour for you.

Sometimes patients are not exactly sure what is wrong with their nose, just that they don’t like it. Other times they aren’t fully assessing the problem accurately. They may be fixating on a full tip, for example, and missing a subtle bump at the bridge. That’s okay though because the next step of the consultation is computer imaging, where we take real-time photos in different planes and angles and then

together we plan the modifications. This is usually a great experience for patients as for the first time they don’t just have to imagine how they would like their nose to look – they can see it in front of them and how their nose will most likely appear after surgery.

It’s also a good time to explore possible outcomes – to see what your face looks like with a very small nose, a change to the tip only, what it looks like with a straight bridge or a slight curvature. You can take these images home to show friends and family and discuss further. We always reconvene again before surgery to further analyse these photos and plan outcome in further detail.

The nose is not just a cosmetic feature. It is also a complicated and important functional organ. Problems such as nasal obstruction, difficulty breathing through the nose at night, sinusitis, snoring and hay fever are just a few of the more common nasal complaints that can be addressed at the same time as your cosmetic procedure. Rhinoplasty is both functional and cosmetic – every rhinoplasty deals in some way with both components.

Improving nasal airway has a domino effect on many aspects of quality of life. Patients can often look forward to improved sleep and exercise tolerance, improved concentration at study and work, improved taste and smell appreciation, and even improved safety (‘Is something burning?’, ‘Is the gas left on?’). More serious problems such as sinusitis can be major medical problems and

with hardware such as the eyes and the brain so near the nose, infective complications involving these structures can be avoided.

Patients often arrive for their first consultation with great trepidation about the rhinoplasty procedure, itself. However, in experienced and skilled hands rhinoplasty is a safe procedure, not grossly painful, has a good complication profile and the outcome is excellent for the majority of patients. General anaesthesia and an overnight stay are usual and patients can expect about 10 to 14 days off work. Within a couple of weeks any major swelling and bruising is usually resolved in most cases. The final result, however, may take several months to become apparent.

Most patients are first-timers but we do see a percentage of patients who have had a procedure elsewhere and aren’t happy. Common errors that have been made in these rhinoplasties seem to stem from poor planning (both functional and cosmetic), poor communication between doctor and patient, or surgical failure.

These problems can be avoided if time is taken pre-operatively to thoroughly assess your nose aesthetically, its airway and functional problems, and by communicating what you expect and should expect from your procedure, in addition to choosing an experienced surgeon.

There is no one perfect nose, but there is a perfect nose for you. It’s one that takes into account a myriad of different aesthetic and functional aspects. **acsm**

## Case study

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



BEFORE



AFTER rhinoseptoplasty by Dr Mooney