



What to Know About the Nose

Nose job dos and don'ts according to Dr. Philip Miller.

With a top-secret client list of actors, models and social elite, Dr. Philip Miller is one of N.Y.C.'s top facial plastic surgeons. The NYU professor and co-creator of Gore-tex (the material used for nose, chin and cheekbone implants) is launching a new Web site, aboutrhinoplasty.com — a virtual tour of the nose that explains everything you ever wanted to know about your snout. **Alex Johnson** asks the good doctor to fill us in on the ins and outs of one of the most popular cosmetic surgical procedures, rhinoplasty (that's nose job to us regular folk).

CAN ANYONE HAVE A NOSE JOB? WHO SHOULDN'T?

Anyone who is dissatisfied with their nose can have a nose job, but people interested in making themselves feel better or more confident are the best candidates for rhinoplasty. Patients who are looking to improve their relationships, jobs or other areas of their lives or are obsessed with their nose or other body parts are prime candidates for disappointment, and I discourage these types of patients from pursuing the surgery.

WHY IS THE PROCEDURE CALLED RHINOPLASTY?

"Rhino" is Greek for nose. "Plasty" means to mold or shape. Plastic surgery means surgery to mold or shape the body, not to insert plastic material.

DOES THE PATIENT'S ETHNIC BACKGROUND EFFECT RHINOPLASTY?

Patients should be educated about nasal features that define their ethnic nose. Furthermore, many ethnic noses have skin, bone and cartilage (the components that form the nose) qualities that limit the range of realistic results. Those interested in eliminating their ethnic features altogether in exchange for a completely different look may be disappointed.

ARE NOSE JOBS AS HORRIBLY PAINFUL AS PEOPLE SAY?

What one person perceives as extreme pain may be moderate discomfort to another. Rhinoplasty in general is not very painful; its more of an uncomfortable inconvenience.

WHAT'S THE HEALING TIME?

Eighty-five percent of the swelling goes away after three weeks and the remaining 15 percent can take three months to a year to finally resolve.

ARE YOU BEDRIDDEN? HOW LONG AFTER THE PROCEDURE CAN YOU LEAVE THE HOUSE?

Patients will probably want to take it easy for the first day or so after surgery to recuperate from the anesthesia. If you don't mind being seen with a cast and slight bruising, you can be out in public three or four days after the surgery. If you won't go out until the cast is off, then you are housebound for one week.

IS THERE BRUISING AFTER THE PROCEDURE?

Bruising comes from bleeding under the skin. If the nose is very wide and you [and your surgeon] want to make that area slimmer, then the bones in that region are sliced and repositioned inward. This maneuver is responsible for the bruising. Not everyone will be black and blue and even if you are, it will go away within a week or so.

ARE THERE ANY SCARS AS A RESULT OF RHINOPLASTY?

Rhinoplasty can be performed two ways: endonasally (all the incisions are inside the nose) and externally. If your procedure is done externally (the majority of the incisions are inside of the nose, but are connected by a small incision at the base of the nose, (near where your nose meets your lip) you will have a small scar which will be virtually invisible within months.