

DERM Q&A

On the Nose

My 16-year-old daughter doesn't like her nose and thinks cosmetic surgery will improve her looks. What's involved in rhinoplasty? Is it safe for a teen?



RHINOPLASTY, ALSO KNOWN AS A NOSE JOB, IS A VERSATILE procedure. It can improve a person's appearance by restoring balance and harmony to facial features. It can also correct structural issues like a deviated septum to improve breathing problems.

"Rhinoplasty is not without its limitations, however," says Beverly Hills plastic surgeon **John Diaz, MD, FACS**. "The main disadvantage is the possibility that you may not be happy with the results." This is common with nose jobs for cosmetic reasons. Judging the outcome, Diaz says, can be very subjective.

It's also limited by your anatomy. "You should expect a better and more refined version of your existing nose, not a different nose entirely," Diaz says.

Q Is it OK for teens?

DIAZ "Although safe for teens, it's rare to be performed on anyone younger than 18 years old. Anyone younger should demonstrate maturity and an understanding of the risks, benefits, and alternatives. Cosmetic surgery should be avoided in any patient younger than 16."

Q What's involved?

DIAZ "Most rhinoplasties are performed under general anesthesia. It usually takes two to three hours. Small surgical tapes and a plastic splint are usually applied at the end. Most patients return home shortly after. Pain medications are usually given, but many people feel comfortable without

them. Often over-the-counter pain medications work well."

Q What's recovery like?

DIAZ "You may feel a heavy, congested feeling, similar to a bad cold or flu, for two to three days. Bruising and swelling peaks after about three days and typically resolves rapidly. Dressings are removed after six to eight days. Most people can go out in public and resume activities after six to seven days."

Q When do you see results?

DIAZ "Your nose may be very swollen and red immediately after the tapes and splint are removed. Most patients look very good after three to four weeks. It takes several months for all the swelling to go away and full definition of the shape of the nose to appear. The final result may take up to one year. Results should last a lifetime."

4 Tips

PAVE THE WAY FOR BETTER RESULTS WITH THESE TIPS FROM PLASTIC SURGEON **JOHN DIAZ, MD, FACS**

HAVE A PLAN

Before surgery, think about what you'd like to change. Your profile? The tip of your nose? The width? The more you know, the better you can communicate with your doctor.

FIND AN EXPERT

Go to a qualified surgeon. He or she should be board-certified in plastic surgery or otolaryngology, which is ear, nose, and throat surgery.

DO SOME RESEARCH

Look at the surgeon's website. Has he or she performed enough rhinoplasties? Do you like the before-and-after pictures?

DON'T RUSH

After rhinoplasty, get plenty of rest and avoid strenuous activities. The first week of healing is critical. Avoid anything that may disturb this process.