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augmenting the ETHNIC NOSE

Understanding why one size does not fit all.
BY BONNIE STARING

Due to the careful balance between aesthetics and functionality that a surgeon must achieve, rhinoplasty is one of the most challenging of all plastic surgical procedures. Plus, a patient's cultural background—whether defined by one race or a blend of two or more—adds further considerations, both before and during the procedure. To help you understand the unique challenge your nose poses, two surgeons well-versed in the intricacies of ethnic rhinoplasty guide us through their approaches, what to expect and what you can do to ensure the best results.

NOT ALL NOSES (AND SURGEONS) ARE CREATED EQUAL Both surgeons advise prospective patients to look for a surgeon who specializes in rhinoplasty. “For non-Caucasian patients, they should find a surgeon that has a large proportion of ethnic patients,” says Dr. Jamil Asaria, MD, B.Sc., FRCS, founder and

director of FACE Cosmetic Surgery in Toronto. “Surgeons who are focusing on ethnic surgery can deliver a more natural and well-balanced result for patients.” If a surgeon doesn't have before and after photos of patients with a similar background to yours, keep looking.

A surgeon with expertise in non-Caucasian procedures will be better equipped to handle the unique complexity of your nose. “The techniques that surgeons use in rhinoplasty are really a spectrum of techniques, which are used depending on the skin, the situation and what they need to achieve,” explains Dr. Robert Mounsey, FRCS, FACS, an Otolaryngologist-Head and Neck Surgeon practicing in facial plastic surgery at Revesse Rhinoplasty & Facial Cosmetic Surgery in Toronto. “Sometimes the patient who you thought was going to require a Caucasian rhinoplasty ends up having very thin cartilage and thicker skin than you expected, so you're going to use techniques that you would normally use for a patient of African descent.”

PHOTOS: THINKSTOCK

AFRICAN-AMERICAN NOSE CHARACTERISTICS:	ASIAN NOSE CHARACTERISTICS:	EAST ASIAN/INDIAN NOSE CHARACTERISTICS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very thick skin • Thin cartilage • Less structural support • Shorter nasal holes • Darker skin is more prone to hyper-pigmentation or even keloid scars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under-projected nose tip • Shallower nasal bridge • Thinner cartilage • Larger nostril openings • Skin that is a little more prone to hyper-pigmentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thicker skin • Under-projected nose tip • More pronounced dorsal hump • Nostrils that slope downward • Skin that is more prone to hyper-pigmentation
<p>UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES: “With the thicker skin, it’s more difficult to contain a lot of definition in the nose. You have to know how to sculpt the nose and the cartilages to get those results,” says Dr. Mounsey. “And with the increased risk of scarring, you have to be careful on how you place your incisions and with your post-operative care to ensure the scars heal well.”</p>	<p>UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES: “The majority of Asian rhinoplasty patients in my practice are seeking a nose that has a higher bridge, narrower tip and greater projection,” explains Dr. Asaria. “Most patients also undergo nostril base narrowing, which corrects too wide or too flared nostrils.” Unlike the reductive procedure of a Caucasian rhinoplasty, an Asian rhinoplasty is an augmentation.</p>	<p>UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES: “These patients have a skin thickness that’s midway between that of patients of an Asian and of an African descent, so incision locations must be chosen more carefully,” advises Dr. Mounsey. “Some East Asian and South Asian noses may have a hump or bump on the dorsal bridge, which needs to be excised in order to create an aesthetic profile.”</p>
<p><i>“The nose is often less defined and droopier than may be desired,” explains Dr. Asaria. “The key for African-American patients is to strengthen the nose and to add definition. This often means increasing the height of the bridge, subtly narrowing the tip and reducing the size of the nostrils.”</i></p>	<p><i>“You must ensure that you create a natural appearing nose, and that means creating a shape that’s within the patient’s ethnicity,” says Dr. Mounsey. “You have to know how high to raise the dorsum and how high to project the tip, so that it looks more refined and is aesthetically pleasing.”</i></p>	<p><i>“With most Northern Indian patients, the nose is often under-rotated and over projected, whereas patients of a Southern Indian background often have softer, wider and poorly supported noses,” explains Dr. Asaria. I think the key to East Asian or Indian rhinoplasty is to maintain angularity and contour that is consistent with their background.”</i></p>

BLENDED backgrounds

“A lot of the patients that we see are actually of a mixed race, even if they don’t look it,” says Dr. Mounsey. “Sometimes you’ll see a patient who may be labelled by society as being black, but he or she may have a nose that’s more like a Caucasian one. You can’t really label a patient by skin colour.” That’s where a surgeon’s experience and expertise comes into play. “If you’re not familiar with all types of ethnic rhinoplasty, you will have a lot of trouble,” he adds.

FOR BEST results

“A lot of times, patients will bring pictures of a celebrity or somebody else whose nose they think their nose could look like,” says Dr. Mounsey. “This is very, very valuable.” By bringing in a photo, a surgeon can tell right from the start if what a patient desires is reasonable and achievable, or if further education about the procedure is required.

WHAT TO expect

Undergoing rhinoplasty is a complicated surgical procedure, taking between three and five hours. The patient will have a general anesthetic during the operation. Post-procedure, a patient will experience swelling and bruising, and a full recovery can take anywhere from two to six months.

COST: \$3,000 to \$12,500, depending on what’s required

RECOVERY: For the first week, stay home; weeks two to three, additional makeup can be worn to improve appearance; week eight, the nose appears almost fully healed; by week 24, all swelling should be resolved

RESULTS: Permanent. “Rhinoplasty is a highly individualized operation,” advises Dr. Asaria. “One size does not fit all.”

INJECTABLE RHINOSPLASTY

An alternative to surgery that’s gaining popularity—especially among Asian patients—is the injectable rhinoplasty, also called liquid rhinoplasty. It involves injecting fillers, such as Juvéderm or Restylane, into the nose to reshape it. “It’s an office-space procedure, so it’s quicker, less painful and has a lower complication rate than surgical rhinoplasty,” says Dr. Mounsey.

The downside is that the procedure is temporary and can’t resolve complex changes or improve breathing. “We can increase the height of the bridge, create the appearance of a more refined tip and sometimes improve the support and rotation of the tip,” explains Dr. Asaria. “We can also use fillers in an artistic manner to create a more symmetric appearance as well as to soften a dorsal hump for the right patient.”

However, don’t expect to achieve professional results without consulting a professional. “It is important to have someone who specializes in rhinoplasty perform the treatment, as the final shape and form of the nose needs to be aesthetically balanced,” advises Dr. Asaria.

COST: \$600 to \$1,200

RECOVERY: Mild swelling for 1 or 2 days

RESULTS: Last between 6 to 18 months