



**Colorado Facial
Plastic Surgery**
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Creating Beautiful Faces

RHINOPLASTY - RISKS AND COMPLICATIONS

GENERAL INFORMATION

Surgery of the nose (rhinoplasty) can produce changes in the appearance, structure, and function of the nose. There is not a universal type of rhinoplasty surgery that will meet the needs of every patient. Rhinoplasty surgery is customized for each patient, depending on his or her needs. Incisions may be made within the nose or concealed in inconspicuous locations of the nose in the open rhinoplasty procedure. In some situations, cartilage grafts, taken from within the nose or from other areas of the body may be recommended in order to help reshape the structure of the nose. The best candidates for this type of surgery are individuals who are looking for improvement, not perfection, in the appearance of their nose. In addition to realistic expectations, good health and psychological stability are important qualities for a patient considering rhinoplasty surgery.

RISKS OF RHINOPLASTY SURGERY

Every surgical procedure involves a certain amount of risk and it is important that you understand these risks and the possible complications associated with them. In addition, every procedure has limitations. An individual's choice to undergo a surgical procedure is based on the comparison of the risk to potential benefit. Although the majority of patients do not experience the following complications, you should discuss each of them with your plastic surgeon to make sure you understand the risks, potential complications, and consequences of rhinoplasty. The risks and complications of rhinoplasty can be divided into two categories: Early and Late. **Early** complications occur either at the time of surgery or within 1-2 weeks of surgery. **Late** risks and complications usually emerge 1 or more months after surgery.

Early Risks and Complications

Bleeding- During rhinoplasty surgery a small amount of bleeding is usually encountered. This usually does not amount to more than 50 to 100 ml of blood loss. In rare circumstances, particularly in prolonged difficult cases, the amount of bleeding can be greater and in very rare cases blood transfusion may be required.

Infection- Infection is unusual after surgery. Should an infection occur, additional treatment including antibiotics, hospitalization, or additional surgery may be necessary.

Delayed Healing- Fracture disruption or delayed wound healing is possible. Some areas of the nose may not heal normally and may take a long time to heal. Areas of skin may die. This may require frequent dressing changes or further surgery to remove the non-healed tissue. **Smokers have a greater risk of skin loss and wound healing complications.**

Allergic Reactions- In rare cases, local allergies to tape, suture materials and glues, blood products, topical preparations or injected agents have been reported. Serious systemic reactions including shock (anaphylaxis) may occur to drugs used during surgery and prescription medications. Allergic reactions may require additional treatment.

Sutures- Most surgical techniques use deep sutures. You may notice these sutures after your surgery. Sutures may spontaneously poke through the skin, become visible or produce irritation that requires removal.

Damage to Deeper Structures- There is the potential for injury to deeper structures including nerves, tear ducts and the eyes. Damage to the dura lining covering the brain is also possible and may lead to a cerebral-spinal fluid (CSF) leakage. These occurrences are very rare. Potential for this to occur varies according to the type of rhinoplasty procedure being performed. Injury to deeper structures may be temporary or permanent.

Late Risks and Complications

Scarring- All surgery leaves scars, some more visible than others. Although good wound healing after a surgical procedure is expected, abnormal scars may occur within the skin and deeper tissues. Scars may be unattractive and of different color than the surrounding skin tone. Scar appearance may also vary within the same scar. Scars may be asymmetrical. There is the possibility of visible marks in the skin from sutures. In some cases scars may require surgical revision or treatment.

Skin Contour Irregularities- Contour irregularities may occur. Residual skin irregularities at the ends of the incisions or “dog ears” are always a possibility and may require additional surgery. This may improve with time, or it can be surgically corrected.

Nasal and Dental Numbness- It is common to experience diminished (or loss) of skin sensation in areas that have had surgery. There is the potential for permanent numbness within the nasal skin after rhinoplasty. The occurrence of this is not predictable. Diminished or loss of skin sensation in the nasal area may not totally resolve after rhinoplasty. In some cases the nerves that supply the upper front teeth may be affected by rhinoplasty surgery. In such cases the patient may experience temporary numbness of these teeth. Very rarely permanent numbness of the teeth can follow rhinoplasty.

Skin Sensitivity- Itching, tenderness, or exaggerated responses to hot or cold temperatures may occur after surgery. Usually this resolves during healing, but in rare situations it may be chronic.

Nasal Airway Alterations- Changes may occur after a rhinoplasty or septoplasty operation that may interfere with normal passage of air through the nose.

Nasal Septal Perforation- Infrequently, a hole in the nasal septum will develop. The occurrence of this is rare. Additional surgical treatment may be necessary to repair the nasal septum. In some cases, it may be impossible to correct this complication.

Unsatisfactory Result- Although good results are expected, there is no guarantee or warranty on the results that may be obtained. You may be disappointed with the results of rhinoplasty surgery. This would include risks such as asymmetry, loss of function, structural malposition unacceptable visible or tactile deformities, unsatisfactory surgical scar location, poor healing, wound disruption, and loss of sensation. It may be necessary to perform additional surgery to attempt to improve your results.

Asymmetry- The human face is normally asymmetrical. There can be variation from one side to the other in the results obtained from rhinoplasty. Additional surgery may be necessary to attempt to revise asymmetry.

Skin Discoloration / Swelling- Some bruising and swelling normally occurs following rhinoplasty. The skin in or near the surgical site can appear either lighter or darker than surrounding skin. Although uncommon, swelling and skin discoloration may persist for long periods of time and, in rare situations, may be permanent.

Donor Site Complications

If graft material needs to be harvested then each site will be associated with its own unique risks and potential complications. Harvest of ear cartilage although very well camouflaged rarely causes a change in the shape of the ear. Harvest of rib(s) occasionally results in pneumothorax (air in the chest cavity pleural space) and possibly a varying degree of lung collapse. If this

occurs it is treatable but may require hospitalization. Although extremely rare, harvest of cranial bone can carry the risk of intracranial bleeding or brain injury. Harvesting soft tissue grafts such as temporalis fascia has been associated with weakness of the forehead and eyebrow which usually recovers but can be permanent.

Nasal remodeling, or rhinoplasty, is generally regarded as the most challenging of facial plastic surgical procedures due to the high degree of uncertainty and lack of predictability. Dr. Imola emphasizes tissue preservation utilizing careful restructuring with minimal excision in order to achieve a natural yet refined result. Besides improving appearance, Dr. Imola can address internal nasal conditions, such as deviated septums, nasal obstructive symptoms, deformities and facial traumas. He encompasses a contemporary philosophy about nasal plastic surgery. "I preserve tissue and re-shape the bone and cartilage framework to achieve a refined, unoperated look." In the past surgeons often aggressively removed tissue resulting in noses that were proportionately too small, had problems with breathing and often collapsed over time.