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thesundaytimes December 19, 2010

Nose job a bridge to confidence

Surgery to alter the shape of one's nose is one of the most common procedures of plastic surgery

Nicholas Yong

Surgery to change the shape of one's nose is a common request in plastic surgery but complications resulting from the procedure are rare. Some of the risks include bleeding and infection. There is also the possibility of being left with an asymmetrical nose or breathing problems, as the nostrils may be narrowed too much. But such complications are few, emphasise doctors whom Lifestyle interviewed.

Rhinoplasties were in the news recently when make-up artist Yuan Sing, 39, filed a suit against aesthetic doctor Amal Dass N. Dass. He claimed that Dr Dass botched a nose job that took 18 months and four operations to fix. The case is ongoing.

In response to queries about the number of complaints against plastic surgeons and rhinoplasties in the last two years, Dr Vincent Yeow, president of the Singapore Association of Plastic Surgeons, declined comment.

Since 2008, consumer watchdog Case has received three complaints related to nose jobs.

Dr Tan Ying Chien, consultant plastic surgeon at The Sloane Clinic Plastic Surgery Centre, says: "An experienced surgeon who has a clear concept of nasal aesthetics and who is familiar with anatomical details should be able to perform the operation safely with maximum precision and with predictable results."

He estimates that he is seeing about 30 per cent more patients than last year.

Dr Colin Tham, a consultant plastic surgeon at Asia Health Partners, says he does as many as 50 rhinoplasties, or nose jobs, in a year. This is 40 per cent more than two years ago, he says.

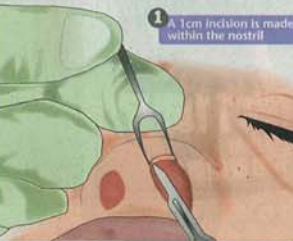
The look most Asian patients want is "a higher bridge, more defined tip and narrower nostrils", he says. "A lot of the younger patients want to have the noses of Korean soap stars."

Depending on what is involved, a rhinoplasty costs between \$2,500 and \$25,000 and the procedure can take between 30 minutes and four hours.

Other popular procedures of plastic surgery include eyelid surgery, liposuction and breast augmentation.

CHANGING NOSES

Rhinoplasty, or the reshaping of the nose, is one of the most common procedures requested in Singapore. This is one way it's done.



2 A space is created between the skin and nose cartilage

Bone supports the upper third (bridge) of the nose

Upper cartilage supports the side of the nose

Lower cartilage adds support, width and height, and helps to shape the nostrils and tip of the nose

3 The implant is inserted via the incision

4 The doctor shifts the implant into place and stitches up the incision

5 Stitches are removed after one week, and the shape of the nose stabilises after a month. Patients should avoid contact sports or trauma to the nose during this period

SOURCE: SLOANE CLINIC
TEXT: FENG ZHONGJUN
GRAPHICS: LIM KIAN

Plastic surgeons say rhinoplasty can be a straightforward or complicated procedure, depending on what needs to be changed.

Dr Tan notes that the nose is a complex structure comprising skin, fat, connective tissues, cartilage and bone, as well as the inner lining of the nasal passage. "These have an intimate relationship and they interact with one another to give the nose its shape and structure," says Dr Tan.

"If a major change is required, a few of these components may have to be separated and reshaped before they are placed together again."

There is a wide range of rhinoplasty procedures. Dr Andrew Khoo, who runs a practice at Mount Elizabeth Medical Centre, says these range from an alar cinch to narrow the nostrils to augmentation and reduction surgery.

Augmentation, or increasing the size or height of the nose, usually involves inserting a solid silicone implant or cartilage into the area. Reduction involves

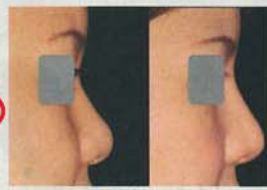


PHOTO: THE SLOANE CLINIC PLASTIC SURGERY CENTRE

"My friends all say I look prettier and I feel more confident now. I didn't dare to wear sunglasses before because they used to slide down but I don't have that problem anymore."

MS LOW, a cosmetics salesperson who had surgery early this year to get a higher bridge. Above are the photos taken before and after her operation.

"Ultimately, a good result in an aesthetic rhinoplasty occurs when there is a good match between the patient's expectation and the plastic surgeon's ability to provide that result."

DR ANDREW KHOO, who runs a practice at Mount Elizabeth Medical Centre

removal of fat, cartilage and bone from the nose and is usually a more complex procedure.

Recovery time typically takes a week. The shape of the nose stabilises after about a month.

Dr Tham adds: "As the nose occupies a central location on the face, many patients have been disturbed by their noses for years before deciding on surgery."

"I've always wanted to do something about my nose" is a very common statement heard.

A 43-year-old nurse, who declined to be named, had been planning to correct her flat nasal bridge for five years. Three years ago, she paid \$3,600 for a 30-minute procedure. "It gave me the confidence that I want. I look better," she says.

A 30-year-old woman who sells cosmetics got a higher bridge early this year, partly in preparation for her wedding last month. "My friends all say I look prettier and I feel more confident now. I didn't dare to wear sunglasses before because they used to slide down but I don't have that problem anymore," says Ms Low, who also declined to give her full name.

Plastic surgeons advise patients: Understand what you wish to change about your nose, what results you expect and what you are willing to undergo in order to achieve these results.

Dr Khoo notes: "As I sometimes tell patients, it is not always possible to give them the result that they want as their particular anatomy or limitations of a particular surgical technique may preclude it."

"Ultimately, a good result in an aesthetic rhinoplasty occurs when there is a good match between the patient's expectation and the plastic surgeon's ability to provide that result."

Dr Tan adds: "The goal is to build a natural-looking and attractive nose that blends harmoniously with the face."

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LUXURY FASHION

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