

## Does Your Teen Client Want a Nose Job?

Among teens, rhinoplasty – surgery to correct the appearance of the nose - is the most popular plastic surgery procedure, according to the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons. But how do you know when it's time to let your teen have the operation? After all, the procedure has emotional, as well as physical implications.

“The first thing I try to ascertain, is if the teen is being pushed to do it by somebody else, whether they are doing it for themselves, or if it is a combination of external and internal factors,” says New York facial plastic surgeon, Sam Rizk, MD, FACS, who recently appeared in a segment about teen plastic surgery on NBC's Today.

Factors that can influence a teen's desire for “a nose job” include peer or parental pressure, celebrity and media ideals, and the belief that a change in their appearance will alleviate teasing or bullying in school.

In addition, reasons to consider rhinoplasty are divided between cosmetic and functional goals. Sports and accident-related injuries or a congenital malformation of the nose may affect a teen's ability to breathe easily, a condition that can be corrected with surgery.

Other teens seek surgery for purely aesthetic objectives. “When considering surgery for cosmetic reasons, the rhinoplasty must improve the appearance of the teen. I'm not talking about just a small little deformity. Surgery is advisable only when it is a major deformity that is affecting the teen's self esteem, confidence and appearance,” says Rizk.

A rhinoplasty procedure can be safely and effectively performed on girls at age 14 and boys at age 15. In addition to meeting with the teen patient, a plastic surgeon must meet with the parents to ensure that all parties are in agreement and can provide the necessary support.

Teen rhinoplasties differ in several ways from surgeries for adults. Teens tend to want much more dramatic changes in the shape and size of their nose than adults do. In addition, teens heal quicker than adults and their skin is more elastic, allowing for better results and quicker recovery. Teens can expect to return to school in one week, wearing a nasal splint.

Typically, the procedure is performed during school breaks or summer vacation - often during the summer between high school and college – in order to avoid missing class. After rhinoplasty, a teen can resume exercise in two weeks and playing contact sport in six weeks.

Rizk performs more than 150 rhinoplasties a year on teens. As with surgery for adults, he uses his 3-D endoscopic high definition system, which allows for better visualization during the procedure, creating a very natural looking nose, and promoting a quicker, less painful recovery.

So if your teen is considering rhinoplasty, make sure his or her expectations are realistic. In addition to smoothing a bump, or altering a bulbous or drooping nasal tip, rhinoplasty tends to have a great emotional impact on teens, removing stress and increasing feelings of self worth. At the same time, Rizk advises that surgery is not a cure all and if deep social or emotional problems exist, the teen patient should seek professional psychological help.