



*Nose Reshaping*  
(*Rhinoplasty*)

*see*  
**change**  
COSMETIC SURGERY

## *General information*

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Nose reshaping or rhinoplasty is performed to alter the shape and appearance of your nose. This may vary greatly in extent and may involve a minor adjustment or a dramatic alteration.

The operation may involve reshaping the bone of the dorsum or bridge of the nose, the cartilage of the tip and/or the nostrils, and/or the cartilage inside your nose (septum). Sometimes it is necessary to rebuild the scaffold of the nose using cartilage. This is taken from the septum, ear or, rarely, the rib. Each operation needs to be tailored to the patient and the extent of your surgery will be discussed with you.

If the septum is deformed it can not only affect the shape of the nose but also cause difficulty breathing through one nostril. It can be straightened with an operation called a septoplasty and it may be necessary to include this procedure during a rhinoplasty.

The scars after a rhinoplasty are usually difficult to see as they are placed inside the nostrils. In some cases it may be necessary to join the two cuts together across the skin between the two nostrils, or columella. This may leave a small visible scar.

## *Preparation for surgery*

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Smoking can cause problems with wound healing and increase your risk of a chest infection following general anaesthetic. You must not smoke for at least four weeks before your operation and for four weeks after it.

Please, only take medication prescribed by your doctor for the two weeks before and two weeks after your operation. In particular, herbal, homeopathic and nutritional supplements (including vitamin E capsules) may contain substances that increase your risk of bleeding and cause sun sensitivity.

Aspirin, and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) increase your risk of bleeding. You should avoid all such medicines for two weeks before and two weeks after your operation. If you are concerned, please check with your GP that it is safe to do so. In certain specific circumstances, you may be prescribed a NSAID for your post-operative pain, which you should take as directed.

If you drink alcohol, it is best to drink only a small amount for the week before the operation and for the first two weeks of your recovery. You should avoid it altogether if you are taking antibiotics or strong pain medication.

Your recovery after the operation will be easier if you are fit and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Regular exercise will help you cope with the operation better.

If you feel unwell leading up to your operation please inform our secretary, as it may be best to reschedule your operation for when you are well.

## *The operation*

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Please come for your operation in loose-fitting clothing that can be easily and comfortably removed. Slip-on shoes are best, as bending over must be avoided after your surgery. Avoid nail varnish and heavy make-up. Rings, ear-rings and body-piercings should be removed at home. Bring your normal medication with you and a sufficient supply for the duration of your anticipated stay in hospital. Someone should accompany you to the hospital and home when you leave hospital.

The operation is performed under general anaesthesia (asleep). You should expect to be in hospital for one to two nights. You will usually have a dressing in the nose afterwards. This will be removed the following day. Getting up and about after the operation is important and you should try to do this as soon as possible.

## *Care after your surgery*

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You may have a plaster over your nose when you wake up after the operation. This should be kept dry. If it gets wet it will weaken the plaster and it may no longer protect your nose. It will be removed when you return for your follow-up appointment at about one week.

The incisions inside the nostrils will be closed with dissolving stitches and any skin incisions (ie: on the columella) with stitches which will need to be removed when your plaster is taken off. It is best to keep these dry until they are removed.

You should sleep with your head up, supported by at least two pillows, and avoid bending over; heavy lifting or straining for two weeks after your operation.

Do not blow your nose – only wipe it gently – for two weeks after your operation. If you need to sneeze, do so with your mouth open to avoid sneezing through your nose. Knocks to the nose and contact sports must be avoided for six weeks following your surgery.

All scars on the skin should be protected from the sun for the first year after surgery. Ideally they should be covered with total sun block and the area shaded from the sun. Sun exposure of a fresh scar can cause permanent discolouration, resulting in a darkened, visible scar.

You should avoid becoming constipated after your surgery. If you are prone to this then you must take a stool softener during your recovery.

Please use any nose drops, painkillers or antibiotics you are given, regularly, as instructed.

## *What to expect after your surgery*

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You may have some blood-stained discharge from the nose for the first few days. This is normal and can be gently wiped away. Your nose will probably

feel blocked for some time after the operation. If this is bothersome, it may help to use steam inhalations, using plain water, in addition to any medication provided.

If you have a scar on the skin of the columella, it may become red and slightly raised during the early period of healing. It takes a few months for the scars to settle fully and gentle massage can aid this process, once it is comfortable enough and safe to do so. Your nose will feel numb but this will gradually recover over several months. Your nose and cheeks will be bruised and swollen, and you will experience some pain and discomfort. This will settle in the first few weeks after surgery. You must sleep with your head and shoulders well propped-up in bed for the first two weeks. Please take your pain medication as directed until you are able to move about comfortably.

A follow-up appointment will be arranged for you when you leave hospital.

## *Driving and activity*

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After your surgery, you must not bend over or lift heavy objects for the first two weeks. All heavy and strenuous activity should be avoided for the first six weeks after your surgery. Graduated activity and exercise can then be started with full, unrestricted activity after twelve weeks, as your comfort allows. You will be able to start driving again when you feel comfortable and are safe doing so. This is usually between one and two weeks. Some car insurance companies have guidelines for driving after surgery and it is always best to check with your own company whether there are any restrictions imposed on you.

## *Complications*

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Although complications are uncommon, problems may occur as a result of your surgery. These can

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result in prolonged recovery but may also have an adverse effect on your final result. These include poor scarring, bleeding, infection, delayed healing, wound breakdown, swelling, a blocked nose, persistent numbness or pain, and asymmetry or unevenness. Further surgery may be necessary to correct some of these, should they occur.

A charge may have to be made for any additional treatment. During any surgery, there is also a small risk of developing a venous thrombosis (DVT), although measures are taken to minimise this risk.

A number of cases have been reported in the world medical literature of loss of smell or numbness and discolouration of the upper front teeth occurring after rhinoplasty, although this is very rare.

If you notice fresh bleeding from your nose lean forward and pinch the soft part of the nose (below the bone) firmly, for at least ten minutes.

If the bleeding continues, despite this, you should seek advice. Either ring our secretary or Clare Park Hospital.

## *Additional comments*

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If you have any questions about the information contained in this leaflet or you do not understand something that is included in it, please contact our secretary for clarification.

If you are concerned about your recovery, have bleeding, feel unwell or have increasing pain then please contact Clare Park Hospital where your surgery was performed, our secretary (during office hours), your local A+E Department, or your GP.

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## COSMETIC SURGERY

Clare Park Hospital  
Crandall Lane, Farnham  
Surrey GU10 5XX

**Tel:** 01252 895477

**Fax:** 01252 850985

**Email:** [info@seechange cosmeticsurgery.com](mailto:info@seechange cosmeticsurgery.com)

[www.seechange cosmeticsurgery.com](http://www.seechange cosmeticsurgery.com)

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a Classic Hospital   
Clare Park