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Great Expectations

The Facts About Rhinoplasty

Rhinoplasty, which is the medical term for reshaping the nose, has become a hot topic with the recent death of Michael Jackson. Talk show personalities and news commentators continue to seek listeners' opinions on Michael's procedures, and the big question is, "Was it botched, and if it was, how can you avoid this happening to you?"

"One of the most important factors for those contemplating rhinoplasty is to make sure their physician is board certified by checking the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, ASPS," says Dr. Robert Graper of Graper Cosmetic Surgery, who is a fellow of the American College of Surgeons, board certified in plastic surgery, and a member of ASPS, the American Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons and the Mecklenburg County Medical Society. The ASPS was established in 1931 and is the largest plastic surgery specialty organization in the world.

Patients considering cosmetic or reconstructive plastic surgery should seek the skills of an ASPS member surgeon—a doctor who has more than six years of surgical training and experience with at least three years specifically in plastic surgery.



Rhinoplasty can give a person a new outlook on life. "Through judgment and common sense, along with pictures and computer imagining, we analyze the face to determine what will look good," says Dr. Graper. "We plan the procedure together so that the patient knows what is achievable. By doing a facial analysis, which is measuring the facial proportions, I make sure that the nose and chin fit the face. I'm able to analyze what is normal for that person or perhaps better than normal and work towards that goal."

Patients know what they don't like about their nose—too long, too short, too wide or too narrow. In most cases, the patient is thrilled with the proposed changes. "However, if a patient wants something I do not feel will look right, I will not do the surgery," says Dr. Graper,

"Noses are the most interesting, the most fun and the type of surgery we like to do the most," comments Dr. Graper, who performs about fifty rhinoplasties per year. At Graper Cosmetic Surgery, rhinoplasty is done as an outpatient under twilight anesthesia, where the patient is breathing on their own but does not feel or remember anything. Operative time is approximately two hours with patients going home the same day. Following surgery, swelling will resolve rapidly and will be 80 percent gone at six weeks. The final 20 percent of swelling may take a year to entirely resolve.

But the lingering question still remains. What causes a botched procedure? Dr. Graper responds, "Sometimes a physician's and patient's expectations do not coincide. Either the physician didn't understand what the patient wanted or a procedure was not what the patient expected. A botched procedure may also be the result of incompetence."

Dr. Graper points out that some patients want a specific look yet the doctor may not agree with it. "This creates a real dilemma for the physician," he says. "The patient may say, 'it's not what you like but what I like, and if you won't do it, I'll go to another plastic surgeon.' However, if rhinoplasty is way overdone, it is very difficult to fix.

"Rhinoplasty can change a face and change a life," says Dr. Graper. "In most cases, patients become more confident, more outgoing. For one of my young patients, it meant going from being a wallflower to becoming a member of the debate team and cheerleading squad. According to her mother, changing her nose pulled her out of her shell."

For more information call 704.375.7111 or visit grapercosmeticsurgery.com or plasticsurgery.org.