



A Marriage of *Function* & *Beauty*

By Ryan Greene, MD, PhD

Many are aware that nose reshaping surgery, also known as rhinoplasty, can produce dramatic results and can significantly alter one's self-image in a very positive way. However, it is not as well known that this surgery can have profound effects on nasal breathing as well.

For many years, rhinoplasty was performed with little attention paid to its effects on nasal function. The operation was usually performed by removing a large amount of cartilage to reshape the nose. This unfortunately could lead to a weakened structure, producing an unnatural, pinched appearance to the nose and collapse of the internal nasal area. This often left patients with poorly functioning noses and a life of chronic nasal congestion.

Fortunately, many surgeons now approach rhinoplasty with an emphasis on maintaining or improving the nasal airway while still producing an elegant, refined cosmetic result. Experienced nasal surgeons have accepted the trend to stabilize the nose during rhinoplasty, providing support and increasing nasal strength. This paradigm shift can make the surgery more challenging, but can produce a much more natural result.

In addition to creating an aesthetically pleasing nose that is in harmony with the other facial features, one of my additional goals in rhinoplasty is to maintain, or often improve, the airway,

both function and beauty. ^{stb} Chronic nasal obstruction can contribute to a number of chronic illnesses, such as sleep apnea. As a facial plastic surgeon, I feel that it is imperative to improve the patient's quality of life, confidence, and appearance, but not at the expense of their overall health. I strive to create a much more stable nose during rhinoplasty that will stand the test of time.

The good news is that strengthening the airway can have positive aesthetic changes on the nose. The use of small cartilage grafts can serve dual roles for the patient. Precise placement of the grafts can both open the airway while also improving and enhancing contour. These grafts can help to produce a natural nasal contour, much different than the pinched look resulting from overzealous removal of cartilage. The grafts can be taken from the patient's deviated nasal septum, but some patients, such as those with congenital nasal deficiencies or those seeking revision of a previous surgery, have a greater need for grafting material. In these patients, the patient's own rib cartilage is my grafting material of choice. While this can produce remarkable results, it is reserved only for those patients with specific needs.

For patients who are considering rhinoplasty and have anatomic features that affect nasal breathing (such as a deviated septum), insurance will often cover much or part of the procedure. This varies depending on the patient's specific situation. But the good news is that patients have options, and there is a solution for those who desire improvements in

both function and beauty. ^{stb}

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