



Rhinoplasty: Basics and Newest Trends

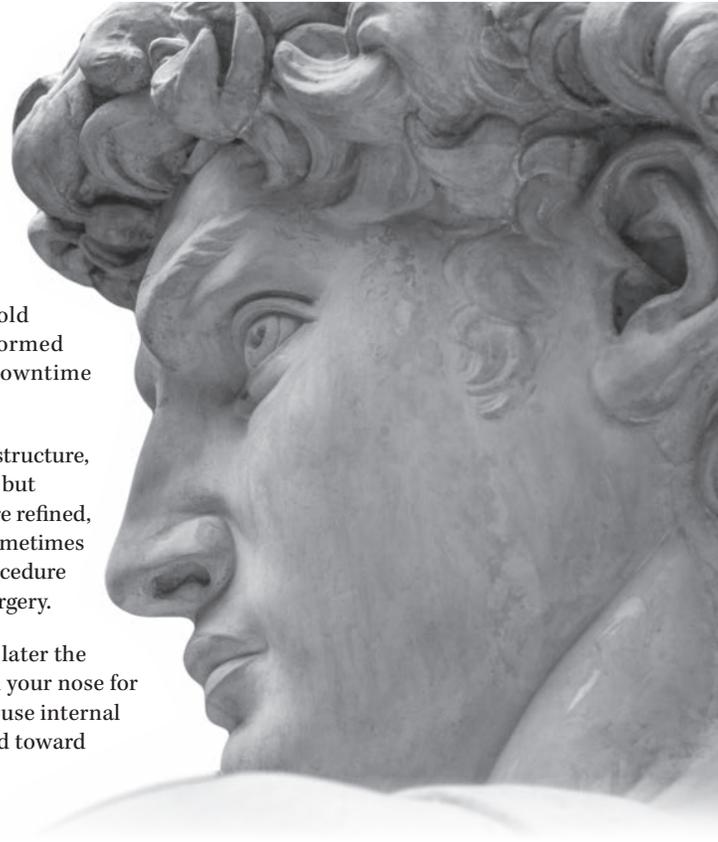
BY DR. LUCIE CAPEK

Plastic surgeons have always been fascinated with noses. Your nose is at the center of your face and gives it much of its unique character and beauty. When we reshape a nose, most often it's with the goal of making it more attractive in the eyes of our patient. What bothers one person, may be of no consequence to another.

Rhinoplasty surgery is one of the most common cosmetic procedures performed each year on both men and women in the United States. It is the gold standard for reshaping the nose. More recently, non-surgical rhinoplasty performed with facial filler injections is gaining popularity and can be a lower cost, no-downtime alternative for some patients.

Surgical rhinoplasty includes reshaping the cartilage and bones that give the nose structure, like tent-poles under fabric. This doesn't always mean we make everything smaller, but rather it's an intricate balance of reducing, repositioning and rebalancing for a more refined, natural-looking and *functional* nose. It's equally important to be able to breathe! Sometimes a cosmetic rhinoplasty is performed in conjunction with a medically necessary procedure like septoplasty. Plastic surgeons are well-trained to perform both types of nasal surgery.

Rhinoplasty is usually performed under general anesthesia and you can go home later the same day. Depending on the specifics of your operation, you may have a splint on your nose for a week, stitches and sometimes packing inside your nose. In my practice, I rarely use internal splints or removable packing even with septal surgery, as techniques have evolved toward more patient-friendly alternatives. Internal sutures dissolve on their own, and in some patients, a few outside stitches near the base of the nose are removed one week after surgery.



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518-786-1700
713 Troy Schenectady Rd #308
Latham, NY 12110
www.capekplasticsurgery.com

What's the recovery like from a rhinoplasty? You can expect to look swollen, and bruises "blossom" in the under-eye area within a day or two after surgery. Within a week, facial swelling and bruising is resolving, your splint comes off and you can wear make-up. In some cases, we don't need to break the nasal bones, there's no splint and bruising and swelling may be minimal. You do need to avoid strenuous activity for 3-6 weeks and you can expect a stuffy nose for a few weeks to months. Although your new nasal shape will be noticeable within the first month, final results and refinement with rhinoplasty surgery take about a year to fully emerge!

Non-surgical rhinoplasty is an exciting, newer technique using facial fillers to reshape the nose. Results last 1-2 years. It's an advanced treatment that can be very effective at camouflaging a bump, making the nose look straighter, improving your profile or correcting minor flaws after a previous rhinoplasty. I perform non-surgical rhinoplasty awake in the office in about 20 minutes. While it's virtually painless and has little to no downtime, it can be risky in the wrong hands. Expert knowledge of the anatomy of the nose and underlying blood vessels is critical. Choose a plastic surgeon certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery who has experience with surgical rhinoplasty.

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 Lucie Capek, MD Plastic Surgery
 @drluciecapekny
 www.capekplasticsurgery.com