

## NASAL DEFORMITIES

### INTRODUCTION

The nose is a central and prominent feature of the face. A deformity (or abnormality) of the nose can be “cosmetic”, “functional” or both. Cosmetic deformities change the appearance of the nose. Functional deformities decrease the ability to breathe through the nose and may cause noisy breathing, snoring, decreased smell or taste, nose bleeds and/or recurrent sinus infections.

### ETIOLOGY

A nasal deformity may result from a crooked septum (the wall in the middle of the nose that divides it into left and right sides) (See Nasal Anatomy). Additional causes include scar tissue, collapse or weakening of nasal structures, asymmetry of the right and left nasal bones, or a specific portion of the nose being disproportionate to the remainder of the nose and face.

The most common causes of nasal deformities are listed below.

**Congenital (present at birth):** A baby born with a cleft lip, cleft palate (roof of mouth), nasal mass or other problem may have weakness or asymmetry of the nasal structures. Congenital nasal deformities may require multiple surgeries to achieve the final desired result.

**Nasal trauma (injury):** An injury to the nose can result in a septal hematoma (a blood clot within the septum), septal fracture (broken cartilage and/or bone of the septum) or a nasal bone fracture (broken nasal bone). Over time, a septal hematoma may cause a saddle nose deformity. This term describes a collapse of the nose that looks like a saddle when viewed from the side (See Figure 1). A fracture can result in a septal deviation (crooked septum) and/or shifting of the nasal bones. If the patient has a nasal deformity due to a trauma, they should see their Otolaryngologist (ENT). Evaluation should be performed within 1 week, to possibly correct the deformity before it heals.

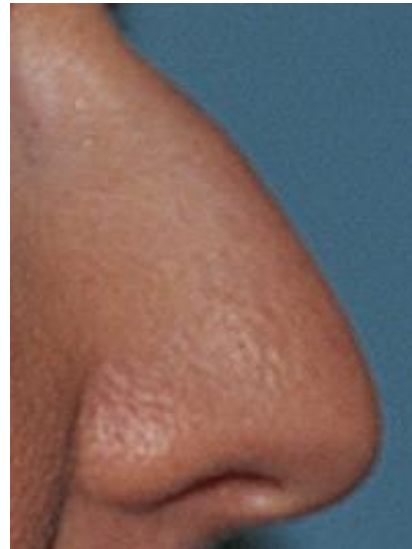


**Prior nasal surgery:** Patients who have undergone nasal surgery may develop scar tissue, weakening or collapse in their nasal support structures.

**Nasal mass:** A mass (or growth) can change the shape or function of the nose. These masses may be cancerous or noncancerous.

**Age related changes:** As patients grow older, they may experience weakening or collapse of the nasal structures.

**Medical conditions:** Certain nasal and systemic medical conditions may cause structural changes of the nose. Common conditions affecting nasal appearance and function include: Allergic Fungal Sinusitis (See Fungal Sinusitis) (See Figure 2), Sarcoidosis, Wegener's Disease (also known as Granulomatosis with polyangiitis), Relapsing Polychondritis and other connective tissue disorders.



**Patient's perception:** Some patients do not like the appearance of their nose or are self-conscious about their nose. Although this is not a true nasal deformity, it may be very bothersome to the patient. Patients may dislike the size of their nose, the shape of their nasal tip, or the presence of a hump (See Figure 3).

## **DIAGNOSIS**

Your ENT will ask you about your nasal symptoms and any concerns that you may have about the appearance of your nose. He or she will perform a complete head and neck examination. Nasal endoscopy (examination of the inside of the nose with a telescope) may also be performed during your office visit (See Nasal Endoscopy). Once your evaluation is completed, he or she will provide recommendations for treatment, which may include surgery. An Otolaryngologist has at least 5 years of surgical training in operating on the nose, face and neck. For this reason, an ENT is well trained to handle functional and cosmetic deformities of the nose.

## **TREATMENT**

Rhinoplasty or “nose job”, is a surgery that can help change the structure of the nose (See Rhinoplasty Overview and Functional Rhinoplasty). This can be done to improve the cosmetic appearance or the function of the nose. Your ENT surgeon may need to borrow tissue or cartilage from other sites of the body, including the ear or rib, to fix the nose. If the surgery is to improve nasal breathing, it may indeed be covered by insurance. If the surgery is only for cosmetic reasons, it may not be.

Septoplasty is a surgery used to straighten the crooked cartilage and bone on the inside of the nose (See Septoplasty & Turbinate Surgery). Septoplasty improves nasal breathing, but does not change the appearance of the outside of the nose.

A closed reduction of a nasal bone fracture is a procedure either done in the office or in the operating room to straighten a broken nose. To be effective, this procedure needs to be done in a timely fashion after the injury.

## **SUMMARY**

There are a variety of nasal deformities that can affect the appearance and function of the nose. An otolaryngologist can help to identify the cause and treatment strategies to address your symptoms.

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