



Surgery: the gory stuff

Well, it wouldn't be a complete guide without the whole icky truth, would it?

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN...

...I have a nose job?

"Rhinoplasty is either carried out through your nostrils (a 'closed' operation) or via an 'open tip' insertion that leaves a scar on the fleshy bit between your nostrils," says Mark Pickford, a plastic surgeon at the McIndoe Surgical Centre in West Sussex. "We use special rhinoplasty instruments – mini saws and chisels – to break and reset the nose bones and reshape them by removing cartilage. It involves a general anaesthetic and usually one night in hospital. You'll wear a splint to hold the nose in place for a week and have significant bruising and swelling for 10-14 days, so you'll need time off work. Your nose may feel blocked and you'll be unable to breathe through it fully at first. You should avoid blowing it for ten days. There will still be some swelling for three months, and the nose will continue to subtly improve for about a year. The tip of the nose may feel numb for some time."

...I have breast implants?

"This is carried out under general anaesthetic and should take at least an hour," says Pickford. "The most common place for the incision is under the breast, just above the crease, though you can go in through the nipple or armpit. Implants can be inserted on top of the chest muscle or under it. Once the surgeon is happy with shape, size and positioning, the wound is closed with dissolvable stitches. If you're also having an uplift, the operation is more involved – skin is removed and your nipples repositioned. You may go home the same or next day and may experience discomfort, hardness, swelling and bruising. For the next six weeks, you wear a maximum-support sports bra, night and day, to keep the breast still and let scar tissue bind to the surface of the implants, fixing them in place. Swelling will go down and the breasts should look and feel more natural over the next three to four months."

POST-OP: NOW WHAT?

You've paid up, gone under, come round... but what about aftercare?

Aftercare is a subject you *must* cover in your consultations. "There are no real guidelines about what aftercare a private clinic has to offer," says plastic surgeon Simon Withey. "Often, it's down to the ethics and codes of individual surgeons and clinics. So be a wise consumer. If a company won't talk you through all their terms and conditions, walk away."

1

What's included in the price?

Establish exactly what the surgeon and hospital's duty of care is to you.

2

How long will you be in hospital for?

And how many follow-up appointments are included? If you're worried about any post-operative symptom, can you get hold of one of the surgical team 24/7? For how long after the procedure does this apply? "With many procedures, it can take a year to 18 months before all the swelling has gone and the surgery has settled," says Withey.

3

What if you're unhappy with the results?

Do they offer any level of satisfaction guarantee? "A good surgeon should want to see you again if you're not happy," says Mark Pickford. "But whether or not you're charged would depend on what was agreed and who's at fault." In the case of implants, many of the bigger companies advertise ten-year or even lifetime warranties. But note this only applies to a fault developing with the implant itself. "In all likelihood, you'd have to pay the hospital, surgeon and anaesthetist's fees for removing and replacing it," says Pickford.

To find a reputable surgeon, visit baaps.co.uk and bapras.org.uk