

ESSENCE

What Is The “Ethnic” Nose Job?

India Espy-Jones | November 3, 2023



LENA CLARA / GETTY IMAGES

Rhinoplasty is one of the most popular surgeries in the world. With over 44,000 nose jobs performed in the United States last year, rhinoplasties are a very common and safe procedure to receive. People may look to rhinoplasties because of medical issues— such as for difficulty breathing or a broken nose. Other times, they may have the procedure done for aesthetic purposes. The beauty standard for this specific plastic surgery traditionally erases ethnic features. The most well-known nose jobs in the Black community are great examples of this: from Lil’ Kim to Michael Jackson.

“The standard approach to rhinoplasty that was much more common in the ‘80s and ‘90s may contribute to Eurocentrism,” President of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, **Dr. Steven Williams** tells ESSENCE. “Historically there was a sterilized surgical mold that modeled the features of a Eurocentric nose.” For example, that includes a thin dorsum, and a rotated and narrow tip.

“[Eurocentrism] lacks an understanding, assessment and evaluation of things that may be important to patients, including the preservation of physical characteristics associated with racial background,” Dr. Williams says. For patients of African descent, identifying nasal features may include a broader, less elevated nasal tip with thicker skin and spaced nostrils. According to the National Library of Medicine (NIH), although there are wide variations in facial features within ethnic populations, most Black patients prefer nasal refinements that preserve their identity.

Over time, the beauty standard in plastic surgery has developed to be more inclusive, with most advanced rhinoplasty surgeons no longer using Eurocentric surgical molds to create standardized

noses. “Now [surgeons] spend time listening to a patient’s concern and preserving the portions of the shape and appearance of their nose,” he says, with new techniques to preserve these ethnic features.

But what is an ‘Ethnic’ nose job? “Generally, in the past, ethnic rhinoplasty referred to any surgery that you were performing on the nose of an ethnic person,” he says. As the terminology develops, “I think now ethnic rhinoplasty really refers more to the concept of preserving some of those ethnic characteristics as you perform a rhinoplasty.” With the structural differences of ethnic noses– from bone structure to thickness of the cartilage – at the foundation of the surgery today, techniques have evolved to refine the patients’ features without erasing their ethnic identity. “In the end, it’s a form of self-actualization,” Dr. Williams says. “It is trying to align the outward form with one’s own inner vision of oneself.”

<https://www.essence.com/beauty/ethnic-nose-job-rhinoplasty-plastic-surgery/>