



# ETHNIC COSMETIC SURGERY

From **Cultural Anonymity** to **Cultural Beauty**

An excerpt from his upcoming book *Beautiful Beginnings*

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It is the culture of beauty that defines acceptance, not the culture of ethnicity.

**T**he world is getting smaller and smaller day by day. No longer are cultures and people separated and isolated. Societies have blended, races have blended and ethnic groups are now a part of the melting pot that is the world today.

Plastic surgery has felt the impact of ethnic identity and is to this day, responding to the needs and desires of the clientele it serves. Historically this surgery was meant to eliminate the “negatives” that defined a person; today surgery is intended to bring out the “positives” to refine a person.

As the melting pot is stirred a hybrid composite of beauty has developed where individuals want the best of all worlds. It is the culture of beauty that defines acceptance, not the culture of ethnicity. If there is a prejudice, it is based on deviations from arbitrary standards of beauty rather than race or national origin.

This article will look at what has happened through the generations and explore the desires as well as the benefits, risks and outcomes of surgery on different ethnic groups.

## **Ethnic Surgery – The Beginning**

“Ethnic surgery,” in the beginning, had its roots in cultural assimilation and anonymity. Early American identity was that of the Northern European. Anyone looking different was perceived as different. Prejudice was defined by appearance deviation, and plastic surgery was quickly seen as a way to change rather than cope and to alter rather than endure.

Early plastic-surgical records are replete with cases of the Jewish nose, the Italian nose and the Greek nose. This was the most identifiable feature of these immigrant groups and was the first structure to change as they became Jewish Americans, Italian Americans and Greek Americans.

The next wave of plastic surgery for ethnic assimilation was with Asian war brides, where operations to westernize the “oriental” eye became popular. This was followed by African Americans trying to avoid the ravages of racial bigotry by intuitively trying to “Westernize.”

## **Ethnic Surgery Today**

The desire for ethnic assimilation and anonymity has faded as most individuals today considering plastic surgery want to improve rather than drastically change – Michael Jackson was the exception to the rule. Individuals still want to retain “clan identification” and remain bonded to their family. The standards of the day are more driven by ideals of beauty as opposed to ethnic erasure.

Individuals seeking surgery are not denying a heritage but responding to the shifting standards of beauty.

Beauty has become a hybrid mix – people want the best of everything!

In 2008, in spite of an overall 2% decline in cosmetic surgery, there was an increase of 18% in Hispanics, 5% in Asians and 10% in African Americans - totaling more than 3 million procedures. Since 2000 surgery on ethnic groups has increased 215%. There has been an evolution where individuals “cherry pick” enviable features and request surgery for them.

## **Ethnic Surgical Preferences**

### ***Middle Eastern/ Mediterranean – Rhinoplasty***

Peoples from this background can have very defining noses. They not only are large by Western standards, but they often suffer from drooping nasal tips. The idea that a nose could be made smaller and a tip elevated and refined has made this one of the most sought-after procedures. This diaspora of refinement has not been limited to America. Global beauty has made rhinoplasty the number one plastic surgical procedure in Iran today. More nose jobs were performed there than anywhere else in the world.

### ***Asian – Blepharoplasty (eyelid surgery), Rhinoplasty, Breast Augmentation***

Traditionally, Asian or Oriental features have consisted of slight bodies with small breasts and distinctive eyes with what is called a single lid with a fold that extends into the inside corner of the eye. These hallmarks of this group have changed in some individuals as intermarriage has hybridized looks. Some individuals here

desire a more melting-pot appearance and seek out surgical correction.

Many Asian noses are flat, lacking bony height in the bridge. Surgery to refine this involves the addition of structural support in the form of bone and cartilage. These tissues are “borrowed” from the nasal septum, the ear, the rib and/or the hip. They are onlaid to create a stronger and more projecting nose.

Breast issues, discussed in a previous chapter, are a “sine quoi nom” for femininity. Many females of Asian descent have seen friends who either by nature or surgery are more endowed. As they move further away from their roots the desire for larger breasts increases. One of the most popular operations in this group is the breast augmentation.

#### ***African American – Breast Reduction, Nasal Augmentation, Chin and Jaw Surgery***

Features on black individuals can be very varied based upon their background. Since historically there has been a mixing of the races, many blended features are part of the genetic make-up. Where once “mixed featured” individuals were ostracized many are now adored for their refined appearance. As such there has been an increase in Americans of black heritage seeking surgery for certain features.

Many black women are too well endowed in the breast area and desire a proportional correction. Breast reduction is a very popular procedure. The procedure is the same as for all other individuals with macromastia. The only caveat is the possibility of increased scarring, since some black individuals have a tendency towards hypertrophic scars and

keloids.

Part of the genetic structure of the individual of African descent can be a flatter, broader nose, with a prominent upper jaw and a smaller lower jaw. Surgical alteration here frequently involves orthognathic surgery to reposition the upper and lower face in conjunction with orthodonture (braces). Those not desiring such extensive surgery have opted for chin and nasal augmentation. The chin is advanced, and the nose requires similar techniques to the Asian nose where the projection is increased to create the illusion of a narrower base. Wide nostrils are narrowed to complete the look.

#### ***Hispanic- Breast Augmentation, Liposuction, Nasal Surgery***

This latest ethnic group to enter the arena of plastic surgery has become the most prevalent. Their goals are diverse. Many seek body contouring to augment the top and reduce the bottom. Breast augmentation and liposuction are two of the most popular procedures performed. Additionally, many seek out nasal surgery to create a more refined profile.

#### **Risks**

The risks in ethnic surgery can be broken down to the physical and the psychological. As with any surgery each procedure carries its own issues. Body surgery and breast surgery involve incisions and therefore scars. Individuals of darker complexions can have darker and thicker scars. This must be evaluated in the context of the desired procedure.

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## ADULT ORTHODONTICS

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teeth, the gums, and the underlying bone are healthy, teeth can be straightened at any age.

The reason today's adult orthodontics is so exciting is that we now have more visible and invisible options than ever before. Invisalign, iBraces, ceramic braces and In-Ovation are just some of the latest appliances to provide you with an exceptional smile.

In-Ovation, also known as interactive self ligating braces technology, is based upon low friction treatment. These high technology brackets allow treatment to occur with lighter, gentler forces, reduce the number of visits needed, and shorten overall treatment time.

Invisalign® is a computer generated set of clear plastic aligners. This technology is an excellent option for the right individual. Benefits include the clarity of these aligners and the fact that they are removable. Thus, they cause no interference with eating or dental hygiene. It is important to note that those requiring more sophisticated tooth movements are better served with fixed braces.

Other orthodontic technologies worthy of discussion include our newest ceramic brackets. These brackets, which are made from zirconium (the same material used to manufacture imitation diamonds), provide better clarity than ever before. When combined with white or tooth colored wires, these braces are a truly esthetic orthodontic appliance.

Finally, iBraces™ are computer generated braces placed behind your teeth. These appliances give the orthodontist all the benefits of traditional appliances while giving patients an invisible set of braces.

With all of the exciting orthodontic options we now have, it is no wonder that adults are making up an ever increasing proportion of orthodontic patients. A straight, beautiful smile can not only help us look our best but also feel great knowing we are setting the foundation for optimal dental health. So if you have ever thought about straightening your smile, just remember, it's never too late to go straight! **IMAGE**

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## PROSTATE CANCER

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and continence after surgery. The robot allows the surgeon to see the nerves much better, making them easier to spare and increasing the likelihood of recovering erections. Radiation causes irritation of the organs that are near the prostate, namely the bladder and rectum. Thus men feel like they need to urinate frequently and painfully, and sometimes have difficulty urinating at all. They also tend to develop diarrhea or loose and bloody bowel movements. Complications can arise from surgery as well, including bleeding and infection.

### Considerations Before Making a Decision

Much has been covered in the media about the comparisons between robotic and open prostatectomy. It has not yet been established whether the robot helps all surgeons lower their rates of impotence and incontinence. One thing, however, is very clear: experienced surgeons have better outcomes after prostatectomy, regardless of the way the procedure is performed.

It is important to remember that a surgeon is "driving" the robot, and the procedure is only as good as the surgeon who is performing it. We encourage anyone interested in prostatectomy to ask their potential surgeon how many procedures they have performed and what their continence and potency rates are. **IMAGE**

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If an individual is prone to hypertrophic scars then introducing them to an attempt to refine a breast is counterproductive and even damaging.

The same holds true for the Asian eye lid. It is possible that in some cases the scar in the lid – which usually fades into obscurity – can be more obvious. Nasal surgery is performed from inside the nose, with hidden incisions; but the borrowed tissue is approached through the skin, leaving visible scars.

Aside from the physical challenges in performing ethnic surgery there are psychological issues that must be dealt with. Other than breast implants, which can be removed, the other procedures are permanent. Patients seeking refinement surgery must be clear in their motives and goals. The physical changes cannot be reversed if there is a change of mind.

### Shifting Standards of Beauty

Not only has the hybridization of the populous created a "melting pot of beauty," but the concepts of beauty are always changing. In previous decades women were more "full figured." Now the goal is to be lean. Once, big lips were considered socially inferior and surgeons were reducing them; now surgeons are making them fuller to match celebrities.

On the positive side patients are rarely running away from their native identity and are most often looking to refine rather than change. On the negative side is often a lack of understanding in the limitations defined by ethnic characteristics. Not all skin types heal the same and not everyone can have the same "magazine" result.

The culture of beauty will always exist and always be changing. It is up to the responsible plastic surgeon to say no as well as yes, and to be able to provide the patient and family with the risks as well as the benefits. **IMAGE**