LIQUID RHINOPLASTY PATIENT HANDOUT

What Is Liquid Rhinoplasty?

Liquid rhinoplasty, also called non-surgical rhinoplasty or a "non-surgical nose job" is a minimally invasive procedure that uses injectable dermal fillers to temporarily reshape and refine the appearance of the nose without surgery. Rather than removing or restructuring bone and cartilage, the procedure works by strategically adding small amounts of filler to create a smoother, more balanced nasal contour.

The procedure typically takes 15 to 30 minutes, requires no general anaesthesia, and results are visible immediately.

What Can Liquid Rhinoplasty Address?

Liquid rhinoplasty works best for subtle to moderate aesthetic concerns, including:

- Smoothing a dorsal hump (bump on the bridge)
- Lifting or refining a drooping or undefined nasal tip
- Improving nasal symmetry and minor asymmetries
- Augmenting a flat or low nasal bridge
- Correcting minor irregularities after previous rhinoplasty surgery
- Creating the appearance of a straighter nasal profile

What Liquid Rhinoplasty Cannot Do

It is critical to have realistic expectations. Liquid rhinoplasty cannot:

- Make the nose smaller, it adds volume, it cannot remove tissue
- Reduce the size of the nostrils
- Correct breathing problems or a deviated septum (this requires surgery)
- Permanently reshape bone or cartilage
- Achieve the same results as surgical rhinoplasty for major concerns

Liquid Rhinoplasty vs. Surgical Rhinoplasty

These are two distinct procedures suited to different goals. One is not simply a "lesser" version of the other.

Feature	Liquid Rhinoplasty	Surgical Rhinoplasty
Invasiveness	Minimally invasive with no incisions	Surgical, involves bone, cartilage, soft tissue
Anaesthesia	Topical or local only	Local or general anaesthesia
Procedure time	15–30 minutes	2–4 hours
Downtime	0–2 days	7–14 days minimum
Results visible	Immediately	After months of swelling
Reversibility	Yes, dissolvable with hyaluronidase	No, permanent structural change
Longevity	12–24 months	Long-term/permanent
Can reduce nose size?	No	Yes, in selected cases
Can fix breathing?	No	Yes, when combined with functional correction
Best suited for	Mild to moderate contour refinement	Structural reshaping, functional correction, major changes

What Filler Is Used?

The most commonly used filler is hyaluronic acid (HA) — a naturally occurring substance found in the body in formulations such as Voluma® or Volux®. HA fillers are preferred because:

- They are reversible, an enzyme called hyaluronidase can dissolve them if needed
- Results typically last 12–18 months, sometimes longer in the nose due to reduced movement
- They integrate gradually, with subtle refinement over the days following treatment

Am I a Good Candidate?

Ideal candidates are those who:

- Seek minor to moderate nasal refinement, not dramatic change
- Have good skin elasticity
- Are non-smokers
- Have realistic expectations about what the procedure can achieve
- Want a temporary result before committing to surgery
- Require minor revision after a previous rhinoplasty

Liquid rhinoplasty is not recommended for patients who:

- Want a smaller nose or significant structural change
- Have functional breathing problems
- Are pregnant or breastfeeding
- Have active skin infection or inflammation in the treatment area
- Have unrealistic expectations

The Procedure: What to Expect

Before

- A thorough consultation to assess your nasal anatomy and discuss your goals
- Photographs taken for before-and-after comparison
- Your medical history, medications, and previous treatments reviewed
- You will be asked to avoid blood-thinning medications, supplements (e.g. fish oil, vitamin E, aspirin), and alcohol for 1–2 weeks beforehand to minimise bruising

During

- Small, precise amounts of filler are injected at key anatomical points, typically the nasal tip, columella (the strip between the nostrils), and nasal bridge/dorsum
- The entire treatment takes 15–30 minutes
- Results are visible immediately, with minor swelling resolving over 24–72 hours

After

- Most patients return to normal activities immediately or within 24 hours
- Avoid pressure on the nose (heavy glasses, tight face masks) for 1–2 weeks
- Avoid strenuous exercise, saunas, and sun exposure for 48 hours
- Do not massage the treated area
- Avoid makeup on the nose for 24 hours
- A follow-up appointment at 2–4 weeks is recommended to assess results and perform any touch-up if needed

How Long Do Results Last?

Results typically last 12–18 months, though this varies by individual, filler type, and metabolism. Because the nose moves less than other areas of the face, filler in this region often lasts longer than in the lips or cheeks. Touch-up treatments can extend results.

Risks and Potential Complications

While liquid rhinoplasty is generally safe in experienced hands, the nose is one of the highest-risk areas of the face for filler injection due to its dense and interconnected vascular (blood vessel) network.

Common (Minor) Side Effects

- Bruising and swelling at injection sites usually resolves within 3–7 days
- Mild tenderness or redness typically resolves within 24–48 hours
- Temporary asymmetry as swelling settles

Less Common

- Lumpiness or nodule formation under the skin
- Uneven results requiring touch-up
- Delayed inflammatory reaction (approximately 1% of patients)
- Filler migration

Rare but Serious — Vascular Complications

The nose's dense arterial network including connections to the ophthalmic artery makes it particularly vulnerable to vascular complications:

- Vascular occlusion (blocked blood vessel): prevalence approximately 0.35% — can lead to skin necrosis (tissue death) and permanent scarring
- Vision loss or blindness: rare but devastating — occurs when filler travels retrogradely into the ophthalmic artery
- Skin necrosis: incidence approximately 0.08%

Warning signs requiring immediate contact with ODC:

- Sudden severe pain during or after injection
- White blanching or mottled purple-grey discolouration of the skin
- Any changes in vision
- Asymmetric swelling or skin breakdown

When hyaluronidase is administered promptly for HA-related vascular occlusion, partial or total recovery occurs in approximately **84% of cases** — making rapid recognition and treatment critical.

Reversibility

One of the most significant advantages of HA-based liquid rhinoplasty is that it is reversible. If you are dissatisfied with the results or a complication arises, hyaluronidase can be injected to rapidly dissolve the filler. At Ottawa Derm Centre hyaluronidase immediately available during and after your procedure.

Non-HA fillers such as Radiesse® cannot be dissolved and are not reversible.

Choosing Your Provider — Ontario Considerations

Given the serious potential complications, choosing the right provider is the most important safety decision you will make.

When selecting a provider, look for:

- Board certification from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) in Plastic Surgery, Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery, or Dermatology
- Documented experience specifically with nasal filler injections
- A thorough consultation process with clear informed consent
- Hyaluronidase on-site at all times for emergency reversal
- A clear emergency management protocol for vascular complications
- Avoidance of non-dissolvable permanent fillers in the nose

This procedure is not covered by OHIP as it is cosmetic.

Questions to Ask Your Surgeon or Provider

- How many liquid rhinoplasty procedures have you performed?
- Do you have hyaluronidase on-site?
- What is your emergency protocol if a vascular complication occurs?
- What results can realistically be achieved for my specific anatomy?
- Should I consider surgical rhinoplasty instead for my goals?

When to Seek Immediate Care

Contact ODC immediately or go to the nearest emergency department if you experience:

- Sudden, severe pain during or after injection
- White, grey, or mottled discolouration of the skin
- Any change in vision, blurring, loss of vision, or visual disturbance
- Significant asymmetric swelling
- Signs of infection: increasing redness, warmth, pus, or fever

This handout is for general information only. Please discuss your individual treatment plan, risks, and expectations with your surgeon.