

Rhinoplasties
are simply
elegant
surgery.

Is everyone getting a new nose?

Last summer, Ruth's friend returned from vacation looking just a little bit different. It wasn't his new clothes. It wasn't his tan. "He said his cousin punched him in the face," says Ruth, a seventeen-year-old from Westchester County, New York. "But everyone knew he had gotten a nose job!" And, if he hadn't created that extra bit of intrigue, no one would have cared. The operation is now so commonplace that Natalie and her friends—a group of seventeen-year-olds from New York City—have forgone formalities and instead casually refer to it as "the NJ."

Though there are plenty of women who are considered beautiful in part because of their noncookie-cutter noses many girls are going under the knife to get a downsized, hump-free, narrow-nostriled, slender-tipped, standard-issue American nose.

In fact, Natalie says that in her circle, the surgery isn't just popular—it's catching. "It's a nose job epidemic," she reports. Her friend Missy, also seventeen, agrees. "All of my friends are getting them," she says. Missy herself is a recent rhinoplasty recipient. "I always hated my nose, but I didn't think my parents would let me do anything about it," she says. "I asked my mom about the operation, and she said she was cool with it if my dad was. They knew I really cared about it, even though they didn't necessarily think I needed one." Since her surgery, Missy has become a walking advertisement for her doctor's technique—two of her friends have booked appointments with him. "My one friend always said she wanted a nose job, and her mom said no way. When I got it, my friend was so excited she harassed

Her mom every day," says Missy. "Then her mom said fine, which is cool, because my friend really wants one."

Michael Evan Sachs, M.D., a plastic surgeon located in Manhattan New York, agrees that nose jobs can be a fad among friends. "I did my daughter when she broke her nose six years ago. She went back to college after Christmas break and her roommate looked at her nose and immediately said, 'You look gorgeous,'" he says. "My daughter told people, and now three or four are having their noses done." Rhinoplasties are par for the course at Ruth's high school; her appointment is this summer, the height of surgery season. "It seems so serious, but when a close friend does it, it shows that the reality isn't so serious and the results are worth it," she says.

It's true that nose jobs seem to be the most innocuous of plastic surgery procedures. They can take under an hour to perform, there's hardly any downtime, general anesthesia isn't necessary, and the operation isn't new. Some former patients report they didn't even experience pain.

"You don't see a lot of high school kids getting boob jobs or liposuction," says Missy—they're more likely to agree to a procedure that will ostensibly help their kids look more like everyone else. Parents may have received rhinoplasties themselves as a bat mitzvah or sweet-sixteen gift—so if their daughter has one, she may actually look more like the rest of the family. But those parents probably kept news of the procedure quiet. "My mom said it was such a secret in her day. When you got it done, no one would dare say, 'Nice nose job!'" says Natalie. "But today, people were congratulating my friend on how great hers looks."

- KARA JESELLA