



## **CHEILOPLASTY Lip Reduction Surgery**

### **Notes for Guidance**

Not all of us want larger, fuller lips. Although it may seem like every aging starlet is having her lips augmented, many people feel that their lips are too big, and want them reduced. Young people with larger or fuller than average lips are sometimes teased by their classmates and feel insecure.

You can have this done on just one lip, if one is more prominent than the other. Lip reduction surgery is relatively minor, but there are risks and complications. You should read all about it before agreeing to commit to any surgery. However, lip reduction can make a big difference in how you look and feel about yourself.

#### **Are You a Candidate for Lip Reduction?**

Lip reduction is surgery to remove excess lip tissue and reduce the size of overly large lips. If you feel that your lips are too large and overshadow the rest of your face, lip reduction surgery may be able to help. The surgical procedure is not very invasive, but you will have some pain and swelling and must take it easy for a while, which are considerations to keep in mind before making a decision.

If you are in good health and do not have any uncontrolled conditions such as diabetes or high blood pressure, and if you have realistic expectations for the surgery, you are probably a good candidate for lip reduction surgery. Discuss your goals with your surgeon so that you both can reach an understanding about what lip reduction can realistically do for you.

You must be mentally and emotionally stable to undergo any cosmetic procedure. This operation requires patience and stability to deal with the healing period.

#### **What to Expect at Your Consultation and Preoperative Appointment**

You should collect the names of a few board-certified plastic or cosmetic surgeons or oral surgeons who perform lip reduction and check on their credentials. Then make appointments with one or more for a consultation. You will discuss your goals and you will disclose all information regarding your health at the consultation. Do not hold any information back and make sure your surgeon has a complete list of all medications and over-the-counter supplements you take.

You will discuss the various looks one can be achieved and the amount of lip tissue should be removed. Your surgeon will explain the techniques, incision placements, or methods that may be most appropriate for you and should discuss all the risks associated with lip reduction with you, as well. He or she may make suggestions about what can be realistically done with your lips.

You will also discuss the type of anesthesia that will be used for your procedure and where the surgery will be done. Most lip reduction procedures are performed under local or regional anesthetics, possibly with oral sedation.



The consultation is also the time to discuss the fees for lip reduction surgery. Ask what those fees cover and what they do not cover and get the information in writing.

Your preoperative appointment is a chance to ask more questions and talk further with your surgeon. He or she will go over preoperative instructions and speak about the recovery period instructions and what to expect as you recover. You may be given prescriptions for antibiotics and pain relievers at this appointment. Your surgeon may tell you that you need to arrange for someone to drive you home after your lip reduction, depending on how extensive your surgery will be and what kind of anesthesia will be used

## **Preparing for Your Surgery**

You should be given a preoperative information packet that explains everything you should do and know before your surgery date. The packet should include a list of all medications you should avoid before your surgery, such as aspirin and ibuprofen. Your instructions should cover what to do with any prescription drugs you take.

You may need to have blood tests done and you may be asked to have a general physical if you are above a certain age or if you have any health condition such as asthma, high blood pressure, or diabetes.

## **How a Lip Reduction Is Performed**

A lip reduction procedure normally takes about 15-30 minutes to perform. It may be performed in a hospital, a freestanding surgery center, or in your surgeon's office. It can be performed by a plastic surgeon or by a maxillofacial surgeon who may be a medical doctor or a dentist (or even both!).

First, if you will be sedated you will be hooked up to monitors to check on your vital signs, such as your heart rate. You may have an intravenous (IV) line hooked up to you to provide a route to administer aedatives and other medications, if needed.

If you are undergoing this surgery with regional anesthesia only, you will have an injection between your lip and gums, deep down inside the chin. Another choice is local anesthetics, which will be rather like the shots you get when you have dental work done.

In this surgery, your surgeon will make an incision the length of your lip on inside of your mouth. He or she will then remove a strip of lip tissue or mucus membrane from the lip and suture the incision closed. This will thin the lip and pull in slightly inward, making it less full. Both lips (if you are having both done) will usually be done at once. The sutures used may be dissolvable ones or ones that must be removed in a few days.

If you were sedated, you will be awakened and monitored until you are ready to go home, usually in about 2 hours. You may feel upset or cold as you come out of sedation. If you weren't sedated, you may go home earlier than that. Even if you were not sedated, you may not be allowed to drive yourself home.

Your lips and mouth may feel tight and quite tender as the anesthesia wears off.



## Recovery

You may be groggy and in a bit of pain the first days after your surgery. You will have to take it easy and sleep on two pillows to keep your head elevated for a week or two, or however long your surgeon suggests. Your lips will be swollen, but this should resolve itself in the first week. You may also be bruise, but this will go away, as well.

You will more than likely experience some discomfort for several weeks. Because of the incisions in your mouth, your diet may be restricted until they heal. You may be told to avoid acid foods like citrus fruits and anything with vinegar and may be told to thoroughly wash all fresh fruits and vegetables. You may be instructed to rinse with an antiseptic mouthwash several times a day. Resist the urge to run your tongue over your incisions and do not pick at the sutures!

If you have excessive pain, redness, pus, or other symptoms that do not appear normal, contact your surgeon immediately! Take your temperature regularly. An elevated temperature could mean an infection.

Sutures will usually be taken out by your surgeon a week to 10 days postoperatively, if they were the nondissolvable kind. Take it easy for at least 2 weeks or however long your surgeon tells you. Try to avoid bending over and don't lift any heavy objects for at least two weeks. Get your surgeon's approval before you participate in contact sports.

## Risks and Complications of Lip Reduction

All surgery has risks and complications. With lip reduction, these risks include allergic reaction to the anesthetic used (even local anesthetics) and infection. There is the chance that your lips may heal asymmetrically or not heal well at all. You may also have no medical problems, but just be unhappy with your results.

Numbness of the lips is possible, it usually subsides within the first few weeks but it may become permanent. Excess scar tissue and lumps are also possible, but are usually rare. If your lips are asymmetrical, this can be corrected, but it is still something to consider.

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This leaflet has been prepared to give a basic understanding of the procedure before a consultation takes place, and to encourage and answer many of the questions frequently asked about this type of cosmetic surgery. Final decisions should not be made until an individual assessment has taken place with the surgeon. There is no obligation on the part of the patient to undergo surgery by attending for consultation. If you have further questions or would like to arrange a consultation, please do not hesitate to call us.