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My nose is deformed since birth. I also had a cleft of my lip, which was repaired in childhood. I will be starting college in the next few months and I dread being teased by class mates. Can you help me?

K KAUR, DELHI

A Cleft lip nose deformity is eminently correctable. It can be done as a day care surgery and recovery period is about 2-3 weeks. The usual problems are wide and drooping tip, flatness on one side, bony deficiency, unequal nostrils and a deviated nasal septum. All these can be corrected at the same time. The cartilage framework is rearranged and tissue grafts from your body can be used to augment certain areas.

Q I am 50 years old. I have increasing hair loss and a receding hairline. Can this be treated? Can hair transplant be done for women too?

MALINI, MANGALORE

A Hair loss in women can occur due to many reasons. Low thyroid hormone levels, hormonal imbalance during menopause, nutritional imbalance and certain skin disorders are the common causes. The treatment depends on the cause and once diagnosed, can be treated well. Hair transplant can be done in women in selected cases. Before considering surgery, you should meet a dermatologist and find the cause of hair loss and treat it. Surgery may be unnecessary. In the meantime, a balanced diet and restful sleep will help to some extent.

Q I have a fairly large mole on my cheeks. Can this be totally removed?

SHWETLANA, CHICAGO

A The treatment of a mole depends on its size and type. Small flat moles can be hidden by medical grade water and sweat proof make-up. This is a good non surgical option and will work well. Larger moles can be treated by surgical removal followed by direct closure, full thickness skin graft or by rotating in the adjacent skin. Good improvement is possible although faint lines of surgery may remain.

Q I am 23 years old. My ears are protruding and prominent. Can this be made to look normal so that I can feel confident about myself?

P RAO, JAMSHEDPUR

A Protruding ears are quite common. Many people are ok with this and can carry it off with a different hairdo. Some find this to be cute and a few consider this to be lucky! But if you are keen on a permanent solution, this can be corrected by Otoplasty by which the ear cartilage is set backwards and reshaped. This can be done as a day care surgery. An elastic band has to be worn over the ears for 2-3 weeks post operation. The scars are hidden behind the ear.

Q My lips are thin. I have been getting them plumped up regularly with filler injections. Is there any permanent method for this?

SHALINI, BANGALORE

A Lips can be plumped up permanently by using your own tissue. This is a short procedure. Lips will be swollen for a few days, after which you can return to work. In the long run, this works better as far as recovery and costs are concerned.

Q I have a dark complexion. Is there any cosmetic surgery, like skin grafts, to change the skin colour?

SABINA, GOA

A Skin grafting is one of the most commonly done plastic surgical procedure. But it certainly is not done for improvement of the complexion. It can be of help only if you have patches of different colour on the face, as in vitiligo, leukoderma and large moles. Skin lightening creams and sunscreens are the only available options now for improving your complexion.