



J-Plasma: For One Patient, Literally a Breath of Fresh Air

Andy Anderson recalls being nearly run off the road as he was driving down Highway 58 in Bakersfield because the two women in the car nudging him over desperately wanted to get a picture of him. The 54-year-old California transplant is not a celebrity of the Hollywood variety. But his nose had gained a certain notoriety: it was, as Andy freely admits, bigger than Jimmy Durante's spectacular schnoz.

So the fact that these two women wanted to snap a photo as they sped past him didn't faze Andy. They were hardly the first to cut him off while gawking and driving.

"My nose would drink my coffee before I would," says Andy with a laugh. "My nose got everything before the rest of me did."

He would sometimes good-naturedly torment his kids by turning his head from side to side, the skin of his nose flopping crazily as he did. "Bet you can't do that," he would tease.

But despite Andy's good humor, Andy had a serious case of rhinophyma. The severity of it was no laughing matter. In fact, it was very much a *breathing* matter.

"I would wake up out of a dead sleep because I couldn't breathe," Andy says. "It panicked me."

Uncontrolled growth

Rhinophyma is a relatively rare skin disorder that results in an enlarged, bumpy, red nose. Severe rosacea can lead to it. Men are more prone to it than women.

Andy says his nose was always a little "goofy," having gotten broken several times during his stint in the military. But over the past four years, it had grown larger, and larger, and larger still. During the last year and a half, it grew so large that it closed his nostrils.

"I didn't know what was happening," Andy says.

Age, said the doctors when he went for his physical.

It's part of life, they shrugged. Some people's noses grow as they get older. Just live with it.

Remediation and desperation

Andy works on environmental remediation projects at water treatment plants and other facilities—demanding, physical labor that puts him outdoors most of the time.

“I would be trying to pull pumps out of the ground, and the exertion wore me out,” he says. “I couldn’t get oxygen.”

It was getting to the point where he literally couldn’t live a normal life with such an enlarged nose.

Stick a straw up my nostrils, he implored one physician he saw. Anything to be able to get a breath.

But the ENT surgeons Andy saw felt his skin disorder was so severe, that there was nothing they could do for him.

So Andy did something: he contacted Dr. Ali Tehrani, whose practices are near where Andy lives in Apple Valley.

J-Plasma: surgical precision gets even more precise

When Ali Tehrani, M.D., first saw Andy as his patient, he was, he says, “surprised.” A board-certified Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon who is also licensed in General Surgery, Dr. Tehrani is the founder of High Desert Plastic Surgery and Montage Plastic Surgery, both in southern California.

Although it is not common for Dr. Tehrani to see rhinophyma patients in his practice, he had treated a handful of them and was familiar with the condition. When he saw Andy, “I was surprised at the severity of his condition, and also that he wasn’t given surgical options by the ENTs he’d seen.” As far as Dr. Tehrani was concerned, Andy’s condition, extreme though it was, “was fixable.”

Surgically, it meant using a number of different modalities—scalpel, Mayo scissors, a spinning burr. And one more: the J-Plasma, the Bovie Medical Corporation’s new helium-based gas plasma surgical device. It features an incremental blade extension and, most critically, an adjustable flow of helium whose micron level of control gives a sharp new edge to the concept of surgical precision.

Dr. Tehrani had used the J-Plasma in some wound surgeries prior to Andy’s operation. He knew that the device’s low thermal spread would reduce any potential negative impact on the surrounding tissue.

“I felt that using it would have both hemostatic and antibacterial benefits for the patient,” he says. It would minimize bleeding during surgery.

During Andy’s surgery, once Dr. Tehrani cut through the densest tissue, things got smoother—literally. Using the J-Plasma allowed for healthy tissue to be blended almost seamlessly into the excised area.

“The J-Plasma eliminated any abrupt transition where the tissue in the resurfacing would not be as smooth,” he says.

Painless post-op

Andy came out of the procedure feeling, as he describes it, “great right away.” That, and ravenous.

“I went home and got a hamburger,” he says. And noticed something when he took the first bite: it tasted different. Being able to breathe through his nose affected his taste buds. Somehow Andy had

always had a good sense of smell, but now this was even keener than before. His nose, meanwhile, had shrunk, and significantly so. Andy found it easy and painless to change the dressings himself as it healed—the J-Plasma at work.

Now he breathes in more oxygen. He has more energy. He sleeps better.

There’s just one thing that Andy misses. “My celebrity status has left me,” he says jokingly. “I told Dr. Tehrani that he fixed my nose so well, nobody pays any attention to me anymore.”

And that, for Andy Anderson, is like a breath of fresh air.

J-Plasma: one device, multiple applications

The helium-based gas plasma surgical technology that powers J-Plasma takes much of the heat out of surgery.

While J-Plasma turns down the heat, it ups the precision to micron level. It safely removes tissue cells layer by layer, allowing surgeons to ablate the affected tissue by “painting,” a technique that spares the healthy tissue that lies beneath.

Dr. Ali Tehrani’s use of the J-Plasma in his Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery practice is just one of many surgical theaters where J-Plasma can play a starring role.

Colorectal, GI, ENT and laparoscopic surgeries are all candidates for J-Plasma, as are GYN and urology procedures.

“I was comfortable using it,” says Dr. Tehrani, referring to the surgery he performed on a patient with severe rhinophyma [SEE MAIN STORY], “and have used it since then. The more you use the J-Plasma, the faster you become at handling it.”



BEFORE: Andy Anderson's rhinophyma was so extreme, his lack of oxygen intake would routinely startle him awake at night.



AFTER: Just 10 weeks after Dr. Tehrani performed surgery using the J-Plasma, Andy's nose had significantly shrunk—and his breathing capacity had markedly increased.