

Ear, Nose and Throat Specialists

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What to Expect Following Sinus Surgery

And

Home Care Instructions

The following information is designed to explain the normal discomforts and conditions after your sinus surgery and help you recover as easily as possible. Taking care of yourself can prevent complications. It is very important that you read this sheet often and follow the instructions carefully while you are at home. Your doctor or the staff will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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What to Expect Following Sinus Surgery

This sheet explains the normal discomforts and conditions after your sinus surgery and the conditions which you should report to your doctor.

INABILITY TO BREATHE THROUGH YOUR NOSE: Immediately after surgery you will be unable to breathe fully through your nose. You will need to breathe through your mouth.

You might have a feeling of sinus fullness or stuffiness just as you had before surgery. **In fact, some patients feel that they are getting worse instead of better.** This is a temporary feeling, which you can expect to last up to 2 weeks. It happens because of swelling and crusting of the surgical area inside your nose. Elevating the head of your bed with two or three pillows will help you to breathe better during this time. You might try putting couch cushions or wedge-shaped pillows under the mattress as well as under your pillows.

TENDERNESS OF THE NOSE: The outside of your nose may be very tender to touch. You may need to avoid lying on your side or on your stomach. Beware of small children or a restless bedmate that might accidentally injure your nose.

BLOOD-STREEKED MUCOUS: After 2-3 weeks you will have some thick brown drainage (mucous and old blood) from your nose. This occurs as the sinuses begin to clear themselves and is normal. It does not indicate an infection.

VISUAL CHANGES: Things might look blurry to you. This is because of the anesthesia and it will go away. You should, however, tell your doctor if your eyes swell or you have double vision.

VOMITING: You may vomit after your surgery. Vomiting is usually due either to blood swallowed during the operation or to the effects of the anesthesia. You will be given medication for nausea or vomiting.

CRUST FORMATION IN YOUR NOSE: It is normal for crusts to form inside your nose where your surgery is done. These crusts will temporarily block your nose. Also, mucous collects around them. Your surgeon will clean these crusts out of your nose periodically until healing is complete.

CLEANING YOUR NOSE AFTER SURGERY: When your nose is cleaned for the first time in the office after surgery it may feel very tender and sore. The doctor will spray your nose with special spray which will help to numb your nose before it is cleaned.

SINUS DECONGESTANT SPRAYS: If your nose feels stuffy after your surgery, a topical sinus decongestant spray or drops such as Afrin, Dristan or Neo-Synephrine may be used up to three days.

ANTIBIOTICS: You will be sent home with an antibiotic prescription to limit bacterial overgrowth, or infection. It is important that you take every pill. Diarrhea from antibiotic usage can lead to a serious health

problem. If the diarrhea is severe, or if it persists after stopping the antibiotic, you should seek medical attention. It is important to let the physician know which antibiotics you are taking. You may require further evaluation.

Home Care Instructions Following Sinus Surgery

The following instructions are designed to help you recover from sinus surgery as easily as possible. Taking care of yourself can prevent complications. It is very important that you read this sheet often and follow the instructions carefully while you are at home. Your doctor or nurse will be happy to answer any questions.

Activity restrictions:

The following guidelines should be followed until your doctor tells you otherwise.

- a) Do not lift anything over twenty pounds.
- b) Do not bend over. Avoid doing things like tying your shoes or picking up things off the floor.
- c) Do not do heavy exercise or play contact sports.
- d) Do not strain for a bowel movement. If you are constipated, take a stool softener or a gentle laxative.

How to take care of your nose and sinuses:

- a) You may have some bloody drainage from the nose. It will gradually go away. Applying a small gauze dressing beneath your nose will help absorb drainage. This dressing – known as a drip pad or moustache dressing – is made by folding a 3x3 or 4x4 gauze pad into thirds and securing it in place with tape. The dressing may be changed as needed. After a few days you will probably not need to use the dressing any longer.
- b) You may have some swelling of your nose, upper lip, cheeks, or around your eyes for several days after surgery. This swelling will gradually go away. You can help to reduce it by sleeping with your head elevated on two or three pillows. You might try putting couch cushions or wedge-shaped pillows under the mattress as well as under your pillows.
- c) Don't blow your nose until given permission to do so (usually 4 to 7 days).
- d) Do not suppress the need to cough or sneeze. But do so with your mouth open. This will help prevent any excessive post-op bleeding from your nose.
- e) Avoid smoke, dust fumes or anything else that might irritate your nose.
- f) Protect yourself from any unexpected injury to your nose or face such as being hit by small children or a restless bedmate.
- g) Do not put anything into your nose. This includes your fingers, cotton-tipped applicators, tissues, or handkerchiefs. Any of these items might accidentally injure your nose.

- h) You may find that a cool-mist room humidifier is helpful in decreasing the dryness in your nose and mouth. You can buy an adequate humidifier for a reasonable price at a discount drug or department store.
- i) You should use a nasal spray such as Ocean Spray as directed by your doctor to help prevent crust from forming in your nose.
- j) Take pain medicine as instructed. Usually Extra Strength Tylenol is sufficient.

Medicines to Avoid:

Do not take aspirin or medications containing aspirin or ibuprofen (such as Advil or Nuprin). These medicines can cause an increase in bleeding. If you think you may be taking a medicine that contains aspirin, ask your pharmacist.

Return Appointment:

You will have a follow-up appointment with your doctor approximately 7 days after surgery at which time your nose will be cleaned. The removal of crusts may be somewhat uncomfortable for you since your nose is likely to still be tender from the surgery. Because of this, the doctor will spray your nose with a special numbing medicine before removing the crusts.

Notify your doctor if you have:

- a) A sudden increase in the amount of bleeding from the nose.
- b) A fever above 101 degrees F that persists despite increasing the amount of fluid you drink. A person with fever should try to drink approximately one cup of fluid each waking hour.
- c) Worsening headache or neck stiffness.
- d) Change in your vision or swelling of the eye.
- e) Large amounts of clear, watery drainage from your nose.

**Important Phone Number:
Office: (770) 922-5458**