

## Septorhinoplasty - Post Operative Instructions

### Surgery

Septorhinoplasty and turbinate reduction involves general anesthesia, typically for about 2-3 hours. Patients may be sedated for several hours after surgery and may remain sleepy for the better part of the day. You may have nausea or vomiting, but it usually goes away by the evening of surgery without additional medication. Almost all patients can go home the day of surgery.

### After Surgery

- You may have soft plastic splints in your nose and a hard splint over the bridge of your nose for 5-7 days following surgery. These will be removed about a week after surgery. Splints inside your nose will make breathing through your nose difficult. A humidifier or vaporizer can be used in your bedroom to prevent throat pain during mouth breathing. You can shower wearing the cast on starting the day after surgery, but don't scrub your face
- Many patients have bruising under the eyes and swelling of the nose and face. This will go away slowly over the 2 weeks following surgery. Taking Arnica Montana will help prevent some of this and make the bruising go away more quickly. Keep cold packs on eyes until bedtime, changing pads every 20-30 minutes, for the first several days after surgery. It is the weight of the cold pack as well as the temperature that helps minimize bruising. A small bag of frozen peas or corn may also be used. Make sure the bag is not placed directly on the skin. Use a washcloth or towel between the bag and your skin
- Bloody nasal drainage for 5-7 days is normal after surgery, usually decreasing in volume with each day that passes. Drainage will flow from the front of the nose and down the back of the throat. Make sure you spit out blood drainage that drips down the back of your throat to prevent nausea/vomiting. You will have a nasal drip pad/sling with gauze to catch drainage from the front of your nose. The dressing may need to be changed frequently during the first 24 hours following surgery. In case of excessive nasal bleeding, you may apply ice to the bridge of the nose and pinch the nose just above the tip and hold for 10 minutes. If bleeding continues, contact the doctor's office
- You will notice facial pressure and fullness as a result of the nasal splints, similar to a mild sinus infection
- Frequent hot showers or spraying a small amount of nasal saline in your nose will help break up congestion and clear any clot or mucus that builds up within the nose after surgery. You may also clean the front of the nose and nostrils with warm soapy water. Do not pull at the splints or the thin blue suture holding them in place
- It is more comfortable to sleep with extra pillows or in a recliner for the first few days after surgery until the drainage begins to go away
- Do not blow your nose for 2 weeks after surgery
- Avoid lifting more than 10 pounds and no vigorous exercise for 2 weeks after surgery. Avoid any activity that may result in nasal trauma for 3 months after surgery (contact sports like basketball, football, etc.). Be careful to avoid bumping your nose after surgery – it will be very painful and could move the healing nasal bones. Toddlers and larger dogs are often causes of accidental "head-butting" so try to avoid close facial contact
- Avoid airplane travel for 2 weeks following sinus surgery; the cabin pressure changes can cause pain and swelling within the nose/sinuses
- Sense of smell and taste are often diminished for several weeks after surgery. There may be some tenderness or numbness in your upper front teeth, which is normal after surgery. You may have clots, discolored mucus or very large nasal crusts discharge from your nose for up to 3-4 weeks after surgery. Depending on how frequently and how effectively you irrigate your nose with the saltwater spray

## **Medication**

Pain medication can be used as prescribed. Pain and pressure in the nose is expected after surgery – the nasal splints cause most of this. As the surgical site heals, pain will go away over the course of a week. Pain medications can cause nausea, which can be prevented if you take them with food or milk.

You will be given an antibiotic for one week after surgery to prevent infection. Take this medication with food to prevent nausea or vomiting.

You can use 2 nasal sprays after surgery: Afrin can be used up to 2 times a day for up to 5 days after surgery (best before bed) to reduce bloody drainage from the nose for the first few days after surgery. Saline/salt water spray can be used once the nasal splints are removed to prevent crusting inside of the nose.

If you have an incision under your nose, you will be given Bacitracin ointment. Apply this 2-3 times a day to keep the incision from crusting and itching.

Take all of your routine medications as prescribed, unless told otherwise by your surgeon. Any medications that thin the blood should be avoided. These include aspirin and aspirin-like products (Advil, Motrin, Excedrin, Naprosyn).

Arnica Montana (which can be purchased at health food stores such as GNC) will help reduce bruising and swelling after surgery. If you decide to take this, start 4 days before your surgery and take 3 with each meal. Don't take any the day of surgery. Starting the day after surgery, take 3 with each meal for 7 more days.

## **Final Result**

Following a rhinoplasty, it takes time for the swelling to subside and for the skin to heal. Most patients return to work 1 to 2 weeks following surgery, depending on the degree of privacy one is trying to maintain. At three weeks postoperatively, swelling and bruising may be noticeable to you but not to many of your coworkers and friends. Final results following a rhinoplasty may not occur for 6-12 months following surgery.