



NASHVILLE EAR, NOSE & THROAT CLINIC

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WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER SEPTOPLASTY

Septoplasty is an outpatient procedure which is done through the nose and can improve nasal breathing by surgically correcting a nasal deviation. There are no cuts or incisions on the outside of your nose.

NASAL DRAINAGE

Following surgery, you will have drainage from your nose. At first, there may be a small amount of bright red bleeding. This is normal and may continue through the first week. A gauze dressing will be placed on your upper lip to absorb drainage. It may be necessary to change the dressing several times on the day of the surgery. Old blood which collected during surgery is dark reddish brown and will drain for a week or more. You do not need to worry even if it continues for several weeks. The drainage may be thicker and yellow-green in color. This is also normal after septoplasty and is not a sign of infection. *Any bright red bleeding that lasts more than 10 minutes, or is heavy, should be reported to your doctor immediately.*

NASAL CONGESTION

For the first week after surgery, your head may feel stuffy. This is due to swelling of the mucous membranes in your nose. The stuffiness will gradually decrease over the next few weeks. After this, you should notice it's easier to breathe through your nose.

NASAL SPLINTS

Soft silastic plastic plates are inside your nose for one week. These are held in with one stitch and stabilize the septum without packing. They are not easy to see and cannot be accidentally dislodged. They will be removed as part of your post-operative appointment one week after surgery.

DISCOMFORT AFTER SURGERY

There is some discomfort after surgery. The outside of your nose may be very tender to touch. If pain medicine has been prescribed, take it as instructed. Do not take aspirin or ibuprofen or medicines which contain aspirin or ibuprofen, as these products may increase bleeding. Take acetaminophen (Tylenol) according to package instructions. A light ice pack or cold washcloth across your eyes and forehead can make you feel more comfortable. If you use an ice pack, put a washcloth between the pack and your skin.

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SUGGESTIONS FOR COMFORT

*When resting, keep your head elevated on two or three pillows. This will help decrease swelling and allow for better drainage of nasal discharge. Avoid lying on your side or on your stomach. Protect your nose from being hit. Beware of small children or a restless bedmate who might accidentally hit your nose.

*Unless you have mold allergies, use a cool mist humidifier beside your bed for the first week after surgery. This will help to thin the secretions, prevent crusting, and relieve dryness in your nose and mouth.

*Use a sinus rinse kit (buy at pharmacy) 24 hours after surgery. You may not blow your nose for 1 week.

POST – OPERATIVE VISITS

You will have 2 or 3 doctors appointments after your septoplasty. The purpose of these visits is to clean and examine your nose in order to help the nose to heal and improve your nasal breathing.

MEDICINES

*You maybe given an antibiotic prescription for infection. If perscribed it is important that you take every pill.

*Pain medicine will be prescribed. Take as directed.

*A 12 hour sinus decongestant spray may be used for nasal congestion after your nasal splints are removed. Use it up to 3 days.

*Use a sinus rinse kit 3 times a day the first week after surgery to keep secretions thin and minimize crusting.

*After surgery, you should not use any inhalers until your surgeon tells you otherwise. You may go back to taking antihistamines on week after surgery unless you are told to wait longer.

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*Using your little finger, gently place a bit of petroleum jelly such as Vaseline on the stitches inside your nose every night. This keeps the area moist and prevents crusting.

BE CAREFUL DURING THE FIRST WEEK

**Activity*- Even though your surgery may seem minor, your body needs rest healing. You should stay home for one day. Watch for bleeding. If your surgery is done under local anesthesia, you may gradually increase your activities over 3 to 4 days. If general anesthesia is used, increase your activities over one week period. Check with your doctor before beginning exercises such as swimming, jogging, weightlifting. Aerobics or biking.

**Diet*- you may eat normally.

**Sneezing*- if you need to sneeze, do it with your mouth open to avoid pressure, discomfort or bleeding.

**DO NOT BLOW YOUR NOSE* – This includes tissues, handkerchiefs, and cotton tipped applicators. Any of these things may cause accidental injury.

**DO NOT PUT ANYTHING INTO YOUR NOSE* – this includes tissues, handkerchiefs, and cotton tipped applicators. Any of these things may cause accidental injury.

**DO NOT LIFT HEAVY OBJECTS* – avoid lifting objects over 5 pounds during the first 10 to 14 days after surgery. Avoid bending over to do things like tying your shoes. Avoid heavy exercise or contact sports.

**Avoid irritants*. Avoid smoke, dust fumes, or anything else that might irritate your nose.

**Avoid lying on your side or stomach*.

**Avoid straining for a bowel movement. If you are constipated, take a stool softener or gentle laxative.*

**Avoid sexual activity for the first 72 hours.*

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