

SEPTOPLASTY

Patient Instructions after Surgery

Activity *Any reasonable activity is fine at any time following surgery,* but refrain from strenuous activity (defined as high heart rates and lots of sweating) for 2 weeks after surgery to minimize the risk of bleeding. Do not blow your nose for one week after surgery. To clear the nose, sniff the secretions back and spit them out. If you must sneeze, open your mouth and turn the sneeze into a cough.

Pain Congestion and stuffiness similar to a sinus headache are generally the most bothersome symptoms during the first week. Pain after surgery is usually mild to moderate, and your pain medication should help. Pain medication cannot generally be expected to *entirely eliminate* pain. You should have minimal to no swelling or discoloration on the outside of your nose or face. Do not take aspirin, ibuprofen or other anti-inflammatory medications for ten days prior to and two weeks after surgery, as these medications thin the blood and increase the risk of bleeding. Ice packs on the outside of the face are ineffective because the surgery site is really much farther in.

Bleeding Mild, intermittent bleeding is common during the first one or two days after nose surgery. Should bleeding be persistent or profuse, you should contact the doctor. At the surgery facility a small piece of gauze is often taped under the nose to prevent dripping of blood or mucus. This practice may be continued at home as long as necessary, but nothing needs to be put on or under the nose once secretions slow down. Cleaning any accumulation from around or just inside the nostrils is fine anytime. Rarely, profuse bleeding can occur on a delayed basis up to two weeks after surgery, and for this you should contact the doctor.

Cleaning *No specific cleaning or maintenance regimen needs to be done by patients the first week after surgery.* The nose is typically congested and sore on the inside, and aggressive cleaning efforts are generally more bothersome than helpful. Over-the-counter decongestant nose sprays containing the active ingredient 'oxymetazoline' (such as Afrin, 12-hour, Sinex, 4-Way, or Dristan) can be used during the first week to help keep the nose clearer, but nothing really works except giving it time to heal. Medications often tried before surgery such as antihistamines, decongestants, and nose sprays will give little or no benefit to the nose and sinuses during the healing period and they do not need to be taken. Many times an effort is made to discontinue these medications after a successful surgery. Dr. Kronenberger will clean your nose thoroughly at a follow up visit one week after surgery to assure proper healing. The nose should feel immediately much better after this.

Splints Splints are soft plastic pieces that are sometimes placed inside the nose at surgery to keep swelling down, to keep the inside of the nose straight during healing and to prevent the formation of undesirable scar tissue. Splints can aid and speed healing and are NOT the same as nasal packing. Nasal packing is an older technique that could be quite uncomfortable and it can be avoided in almost all cases. Splints are not visible from the outside and are removed easily in the office at the first (one week) postoperative visit.

For questions or problems

Call Ear, Nose & Throat Specialty Care at (214) 826-3681. After hours call (214) 346-1359.