

Post-Operative Instructions for Nasal Septal Reconstruction (NSR) / Nasal Fracture (ORNF, CRNF) / Rhinoplasty

The following instructions are based on experience with thousands of nasal operations. They are designed to answer practically every question that may arise regarding the "dos and don'ts" after surgery. You and your family should read the instructions several times to familiarize yourselves with them. Attempt to follow them faithfully because those who do so generally have the smoothest post-operative course. This, of course, favors proper healing and a better result.

SWELLING

Every operation, no matter how minor, is accompanied by swelling of the surrounding tissues. The amount of swelling varies from one person to another but seems greater in the face because the looseness of the tissues makes the features appear distorted. It is usually greater when both the inside (septum) and the outside of the nose have been operated upon than when the surgery is done on the inside (septum) only.

Some degree of swelling follows any surgical procedure: The swelling is due to the new tissue fluids brought into the area by the body to promote healing. When these healing fluids are no longer required, the tissues release them and they are absorbed through the bloodstream. As this occurs, the nasal congestion will gradually improve.

You must be willing to accept the temporary swelling and discoloration, which occurs following such operations. Most people feel it is a small inconvenience to pay for the physical and psychological improvement they experience.

The swelling will gradually increase, reaching its peak on the third day. This is not serious and it is not an indication that something is going wrong with your operation. Minor swelling may persist for several weeks. The main thing to remember is: such swelling eventually subsides.

You can help the swelling subside in several ways:

- Avoid bending over or lifting heavy things for one week. Besides aggravating swelling, this may raise the blood pressure and start bleeding.
- Avoid hitting or bumping your nose for at least one week following surgery. It is not wise to pick up small children who may inadvertently bump your nose.
- Sleep with the head of the bed elevated for at least one week following surgery. To accomplish this, place two or three pillows under the head of the mattress and one or two on top of it. Try not to roll over on your nose.
- We recommend you use ice compresses consisting of moistened cold wash cloths (not an ice bag) applied in an inverted "V" across the top of the nose and covering each eye as much as possible during the first three days after surgery.
- Avoid sunning the face for prolonged periods for one month; ordinary exposure is not harmful.
- Do not tweeze the eyebrows for one week.

- When bathing, avoid getting the nasal dressing wet; if it becomes loose, let us know.
- You may gently blow or sniff your nose the third day after surgery. Don't push on the nose after blowing. Blow gently through both sides at the same time.
- Avoid rubbing the nostrils and base of the nose with a tissue or handkerchief. Not only will this aggravate swelling but it could cause infection, bleeding or the excessive accumulation of scar tissue on the inside of the nose. Use a mustache dressing if the discharge is excessive.
- Report any excessive bleeding that persists after using a decongestant nasal spray (Afrin or neosynephrine) and sitting up for fifteen minutes.

DISCOLORATION

Following surgery it is not unusual to have varying amounts of discoloration about the eyes. Like the swelling, the discoloration may become more pronounced one or two days after surgery. It usually does not last for more than a week, all the while decreasing in intensity. The measures that help the swelling to subside will also help the discoloration. You can camouflage the discoloration, to some extent, by using makeup.

HEMORRHAGE

You can expect a fair amount of mucous drainage for several days after surgery. It will be blood tinged and should cause you no concern unless the drainage becomes frankly bloody and flows profusely as when one cuts a finger.

If hemorrhage does occur, go to bed, use a nasal spray such as Afrin or neosynephrine, and elevate the head. Then apply ice compresses about the nose and report it by telephone. Avoid: bending over, lifting heavy objects, or hitting your nose.

PAIN

There is usually only mild to moderate pain following nasal and sinus surgery but the individual may experience a bruised sensation as a result of the post-operative swelling. As is usually the case with such things, this seems worse at night and when one becomes nervous. Try the application of cold compresses. If this is not effective, you may take one of the pain relievers prescribed for you.

During the healing process you may experience occasional sinus headaches. These may occur up to several weeks after surgery. They will gradually disappear as the healing process continues.

NASAL BLOCKAGE AND NOSE SPRAYS

Nasal blockage is to be expected after nasal surgery and will gradually subside over a period of time. The patient must be reconciled to this.

Nose sprays such as Afrin or neosynephrine may be used for several days if recommended by your doctor. Ocean Nasal Spray, which is a saline (salt-water)

mist, can be used as long as you wish. This will help keep the nose moist and keep crusts from forming.

CLEANING THE NOSE

Do not blow the nose at all for three days; after that, blow through both sides at once - do not compress one side. You may clean the outside of the nose and the upper lip with Q-tips moistened with hydrogen peroxide as soon as you return home, but don't rub too vigorously.

Dried blood in the nostrils may be gently removed and cleaned with a moistened Q-tip. Vaseline or an antibiotic ointment may be applied to the inside of the nostrils and the outside incision if your physician specified this. The Vaseline helps soften crusts and usually makes the inside of the nose feel better. This may be continued for several weeks.

Ocean Nasal Spray, which is a saline or salt-water mist, can be used as often and as long as you wish. This will help keep the nose moist and keep the crusts from forming.

Soon after the bandage has been removed, the outside of the nose should be cleaned twice daily to remove the oily material that is produced by the skin glands. The nose can withstand gentle cleansing at this time. A mild soap (Neutrogena or Ivory) with cotton balls is recommended. Unless cleaned properly, pimples can develop in the nasal skin. If they do, clean them with hydrogen peroxide. They should clear up in a few days.

RESUMING ACTIVITIES

You may sleep without the head of the bed elevated after one week.

Until the bandage is removed, you should wear clothing that fastens either in the front or the back rather than the type that must be pulled over the head.

You may resume physical activity in two weeks. No swimming, gym, tennis, jogging or other strenuous athletic activity for three weeks. No diving, skiing or contact sports for two months.

Try to avoid sneezing until the bandage is removed. If you must sneeze, let it come out the mouth like a cough. If it becomes a problem, we will prescribe medication to alleviate the condition.

DRYNESS OF THE LIPS

If the lips become dry from breathing through the mouth, coat them with Vaseline, Chapstick, or lipstick.

TEMPERATURE

Generally the body temperature does not rise much above 100 degrees following surgery. This rise is due to the fact that the patient becomes mildly dehydrated

because he does not drink enough fluids. Patients will often think that they have a fever because they feel warm, but in reality they do not. To be sure, you should measure your temperature. Report any persistent elevation above 100 degrees.

MEDICATIONS

Following surgery, you should take the medications your physician prescribed. You should resume any medications you were taking before the operation. Do not take aspirin or aspirin products, ibuprofen, or "arthritis" medications for two weeks after the operation.

WEAKNESS

After an anesthetic or operation, it is not unusual for a person to feel dizzy. This gradually clears up in a few days without medication.

BATHING AND HAIR CARE

Tub bathing or showering can be resumed as soon as the patient feels strong enough to do so. It is probably best to have assistance standing by on the first couple of occasions.

YOUR FIRST POST-OPERATIVE VISIT

If your surgery was at the hospital, please call the office for your first post-operative visit (usually in one week or less). If your operation was performed in our Surgery Center, this appointment will be scheduled before leaving the surgery center.

RETURNING TO WORK

The average patient is able to return to work about seven days following the operation, the day the bandages are removed. Some individuals may return to desk jobs in three to four days. When you should return to work depends on the amount of physical activity and public contact your job involves in addition to the amount of swelling and discoloration you develop. The average patient may return to work in seven days.

INJURY TO THE NOSE

Many individuals sustain accidental hits on the nose during the early post-operative period. One need not be too concerned unless the blow is hard or if hemorrhage, deformity or considerable swelling ensues. Report the incident by telephone or your next office appointment if you are sufficiently concerned. If you do sustain an injury to the nose, a minor procedure may be necessary.

FINALLY

Some things to know:

- When the bandage is first removed, the nose will appear swollen and turned up too much; this is due to operative swelling over the nose and in the upper

lip. This swelling will begin to subside within a week. However, it will take at least one year for all the swelling to disappear and for your nose to reach its final shape.

- In most cases, the discoloration will gradually disappear over a period of seven to ten days.
- With thicker and more oily skin it takes longer for the swelling to subside, so be patient.
- The upper lip may feel stiff for awhile and you may feel that it interferes with your smile; this should disappear in several weeks.
- The tip of the nose sometimes feels numb after nasal surgery, but this eventually disappears.
- Patients who have very oily skin may use rubbing alcohol and cotton balls to remove excess oils from the nasal skin for 2 - 3 days after the dressings have been removed.
- Noses that are crooked, have sustained injuries, or have had previous surgery are more difficult to correct. Additional improvement may be obtained with a relatively minor procedure later.

Please follow these instructions faithfully so that you can attain the desired result.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to call us now.