

## **WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER NOSE AND/OR SINUS SURGERY**

- Some bloody drainage and oozing from your nose
- Some discomfort and pressure around your nose and face
- Some swelling and sensation of congestion similar to a sinus infection
- Some difficulty breathing while lying flat/sleeping
- Crusty nasal drainage
- Dry nasal passages
- Nausea for 12-24 hours after surgery
- Low grade fever (100.4° Fahrenheit/38 ° Celsius) for 48 hours after surgery

Overall, recovery after nose and/or sinus surgery is generally mild. You will spend about 1-2 hours in the recovery area and the vast majority of patients go home the same day. Rarely, some patients may require an overnight stay in the hospital. This occurs if you need additional recovery time or if you have other medical problems that require special attention in the post-operative period. We recommend taking about 1 week off from school or work after surgery to recover.

## **ACTIVITY**

- Do not lift anything heavy for 7-14 days after surgery (your surgeon will let you know his/her preference regarding this timeframe). You should not lift anything heavier than a gallon of milk.
- No strenuous or vigorous activity for 7-14 days after surgery. No weightlifting, jogging, running, swimming, bicycle riding, tennis, or group sports.
- Please avoid blowing your nose for 7-14 days after surgery.
- Do not suppress the need to cough or sneeze, but cough/sneeze with your mouth open, to allow the pressure to escape through your mouth.
- Sleep with your head slightly elevated with pillows and cushions for at least three nights. This will help decrease swelling and improve breathing.

## **DIET**

- Regular diet. If your throat is sore from the breathing tube, you can start with soft foods, but any type of food is allowed after nose or sinus surgery.

## **SHOWERING/BATHING**

- You may shower/bathe at anytime.

## **NASAL CARE WITH SINUS SPRAYS OR RINSES**

- Start salt water sprays or salt water rinses/irrigations in your nose the morning after surgery. Your surgeon will tell you which one to use. Most of the time rinsing is recommended, since any type of sinus surgery requires post-operative rinsing instead of sprays (you likely have already been rinsing pre-operatively and are

familiar with how to do this). Sometimes only sprays will be recommended if you had limited nasal surgery and no sinus surgery.

- Rinsing your nose with salt water after surgery is VERY important! It will keep the inside of your nose clean, decrease crusting, improve healing, and prevent infection.
- You may be asked to add a medication to your saline rinse. Most frequently this is a steroid called budesonide. Your surgeon will let you know if he/she wants you to start adding budesonide to your rinses the day after surgery.
- Use sprays or rinses/irrigations at least 2 times a day, but more frequently is even better! If you are adding steroids to your rinse, only perform the steroid rinse 2 times a day, but you can perform extra salt water rinses on top of the 2 steroids rinses.
- Both the spray (popular brand names are Ocean or Ayr) and rinse (popular brand names are NeilMed Sinus Rinse or Neti-Pot) can be purchased over-the-counter at any pharmacy. The salt water solution comes pre-made in the spray bottle. For the rinse/irrigation bottle, fill the container with 8 ounces (240 milliliters) of distilled (or boiled then cooled) water and add one salt packet to the water. Remember to point the spray and rinse bottles more towards the ear and away from the middle of the nose.

## **MEDICATIONS**

- Pain medication: Most patients require only acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Advil) for post-operative pain control. Since you can take both of these medications every 6 hours, alternating Tylenol and Advil allows you to take a pain medication every 3 hours. For example, Tylenol 650mg at 12pm, Advil 600mg at 3pm, Tylenol 650mg at 6pm, Advil 600mg at 9pm. If you cannot take Tylenol or Advil or would prefer something stronger (such as a narcotic) let your surgeon know the morning of surgery. Alternatively, if you try the Tylenol/Advil regimen but it is not helping, you can call the office to request something stronger.
- Antibiotics: Your surgeon will let you know if he/she would like you to take antibiotics before or after surgery. Many times an antibiotic is not needed, so do not be concerned if one is not prescribed. Consider probiotics if diarrhea or nausea occur with antibiotic use. However, if these symptoms are severe, stop the antibiotic and call the office.
- Oral steroids: Some patients are prescribed prednisone to start a few days before surgery. If you have were prescribed prednisone, continue to take it after surgery and decrease the dose as prescribed by your surgeon. You should finish this medication a little over a week after your surgery. Watch out for side effects such as mood changes, insomnia, high blood sugar, hip or joint pain, etc.

## **WHAT TO DO ABOUT BLEEDING**

- As mentioned above, bloody drainage and oozing are very much expected after nose and/or sinus surgery.

- For mild bleeding, apply mild pressure on the tip of your nose (the soft part, not the bony part) for 15 minutes.
- You can also use Afrin Nasal Spray (oxymetazoline) to help stop the bleeding. This medication is over-the-counter. Use 2 sprays in each nostril twice daily for no more than 3 days. Using Afrin for more than 3 days can cause worsening congestion.
- A day or two after surgery, the nasal discharge may become brown or maroon in color instead of red or pink. This is normal. It just means that you are rinsing out old blood. It does not mean that there is an infection.

## HEALING

- It *generally* takes about 8 weeks for the nose and sinus lining to heal, but may take longer if you had polyps, severe inflammation of the nasal lining, or significant bone involvement.
- During the healing process, your nose and sinus “hair cells” or cilia may not be working properly to move mucus normally through your nose. This means that mucus can sit in the nose and become thick and dry, forming crusts. Dryness and crusting of blood and mucus can delay healing after sinus surgery, so make sure to take the medications prescribed by your surgeon and to rinse, rinse, rinse!

## POST-OPERATIVE VISITS

- The care of your sinuses does not end when surgery is complete. Post-operative visits are an important component of your treatment. During these visits, your sinuses will be assessed with a scope for proper healing, and bloody crusts, mucous, and sometimes scar tissue will be removed to promote proper healing of the nose and sinuses.
- If you had absorbable packing or splints placed in your nose during surgery, these may be removed at your first post-op visit.
- Bleeding may also occur for 12-24 hours after the first post-op appointment.

## CALL YOUR DOCTOR AFTER SURGERY IF:

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| • You have continuous bleeding that does not stop with pressure on the tip of your nose for 15 minutes and that hasn't improved with Afrin | • A fever > 100.4° Fahrenheit/38° Celsius that lasts longer than 24-48 hours after surgery |
| • Slow bleeding that lasts more than 24 hours that hasn't improved with Afrin  | • Severe nausea/vomiting resulting in dehydration  |
| • Clear, watery drainage from your nose not related to the salt water rinses   | • Changes in vision  |
|  | • Swelling around your eyes  |
|  | • Worsening headache   |
|  | • Neck stiffness   |