



COMMONWEALTH

FACIAL PLASTIC SURGERY

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS - RHINOPLASTY

The following instructions have been designed to answer practically every question that might arise regarding the "do's" and "don'ts" after rhinoplasty surgery. You and your family should read these several times to become familiar with them. Follow them faithfully because those who do generally have the smoothest postoperative course.

SWELLING

Every operation, no matter how minor, is accompanied by swelling and sometimes bruising of the surrounding tissues. The amount varies from person to person. The swelling and bruising itself is not serious and is to be expected after your surgery. It sometimes is worse on the second postoperative day than it was on the first, and in the mornings.

Remember that swelling and bruising will always subside eventually. You can help decrease the swelling in the following ways:

1. Ice the nose for the first 48-72 hours after surgery. Ice placed inside a glove, frozen peas, or cold gel compresses can be used 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off while awake. Placing gauze over the skin under the ice can make it more comfortable. Avoid getting the tape dressing wet.
2. Sleep with your head elevated for at least 1 week after surgery. Keep the head above the heart is sufficient to encourage drainage of swelling away from the nose.
3. Avoid staying in bed after surgery. Moving around / light activity encourages circulation.
4. Avoid bending over or lifting heavy things for one week. Besides aggravating the swelling, this may raise your blood pressure and cause bleeding.
5. Avoid hitting or bumping your new nose. It is wise not to pick up small children.
6. Avoid exposure to excessive sun during the 6 weeks after your operation. A sunscreen is always advisable regardless. Use of sunscreen containing zinc or titanium oxide is encouraged.
7. Do not tweeze your eyebrows for one week. This could cause infection.
8. Avoid "sniffing", that is, constantly attempting to pull air through the nose as some people do when their nose feels blocked. This will not relieve the sensation of blockage - it will only aggravate it because the suction created on the inside will cause more swelling. However, gently breathing through the nose is fine and encouraged.
9. Avoid rubbing the nostrils and the base of the nose with tissues or a handkerchief. Not only will this aggravate the swelling, but also it may cause infection, bleeding, or the accumulation of scar tissue inside the nose. Use the "moustache" gauze dressing instead if discharge is excessive.

DISCOLORATION

It is not unusual to have varying amounts of bruising/discoloration in the cheeks and even beyond the face. Like swelling, the discoloration may become more pronounced a few days after surgery. It usually lasts not more than a week or two, all the while decreasing in intensity. If the nasal bones were not reshaped, there is usually very little bruising. Early use of icing/cold compresses is certainly recommended. Use of Arnica or Bromelain supplement before and after surgery (usually provided by the office) can help prevent and reduce swelling and bruising. Arnica gel or cream can be applied directly to bruises under the eyes as well.

NUMBNESS

After surgery you will notice that the tip of your nose feels firm, and it is not uncommon for the nose to feel numb for a short time. Incisions inside your nose may feel slightly irregular on their surface until all swelling disappears.

NASAL PACKING AND BLEEDING

The nose is not typically packed after surgery. Therefore, it is not uncommon to soak several gauze pads (your moustache dressing) during the first several hours after surgery. The frequency with which these are changed should decrease.

Change the drip pad as needed using 4x4 gauze and tape.

Whenever the nasal passages are blocked, such as when you have a cold or an allergy, the nasal glands produce more mucous than normal. Your nose will be partially blocked from the postoperative swelling, so you can expect an increase in mucous drainage for several days. It may be blood tinged, which is expected.

If a turbinate resection was part of your nasal procedure, bleeding can occur from this area for up to six weeks after your surgery. Be diligent in using the nasal saline spray and ointment. This helps the healing process and the dissolving of the crusts that form on the turbinates.

PAIN

There is usually little actual pain following nasal surgery. You will be prescribed pain medication to take as needed. If the pain is mild, Tylenol can be used alone. Watch your total dose of Tylenol since the prescription pain medication typically contains Tylenol (Acetaminophen).

The prescribed pain medication often causes sensations of light-headedness, particularly in the immediate postoperative period. Please take the pain medicine as needed. Do not try to "tough it out" if you are uncomfortable. DO NOT take aspirin, Motrin (ibuprofen), or any other NSAIDs (Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs). This can increase your chance of bleeding and bruising.

NAUSEA

Sometimes the anesthesia, the pain pills, or swallowed blood will make you nauseated. Nausea medication that dissolves under the tongue will usually be prescribed before surgery.

DEPRESSION

It is not unusual for patients to go through a period of mild depression after surgery. Even though you very much want this surgery, and even though we have tried to tell you what to expect postoperatively, you may be somewhat shocked at seeing your own face swollen and bruised.

This is a temporary condition which will subside shortly. The best thing to do is to busy yourself with the details of your postoperative care and try to remember that the recovery period will soon be over.

INSOMNIA

You may experience some difficulty falling asleep. If this becomes a significant issue, contact the office. We can prescribe sleeping medication if needed.

KEEPING A STIFF UPPER LIP

The upper lip is important in nasal surgery, as much work is done in this area. To keep the healing tissues from being disturbed, avoid excessively moving your upper lip for as long as the bandage is in place.

Avoid excessive smiling or pursing the lips such as kissing for ten days.

Do not pull the upper lip down as women do when applying lipstick. Apply lipstick with a brush.

Be careful with a toothbrush to avoid moving the lip excessively.

Avoid gum or foods that are hard to chew. Soft foods may be preferable for the first week. Take small bites to avoid opening the mouth widely.

CLEANING THE NOSE

Don't blow the nose at all for ten 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 cotton tipped applicators (Q-tips) moistened with warm water or dilute hydrogen peroxide (mix 50/50 with warm water). You can do this as soon as you return from the hospital, but do not rub the nose very hard.

CLEANING THE NOSE

Saline (salt water) nose spray and an antibiotic ointment are prescribed to keep the nose moist and open. This will prevent any crusts from forming. Start using these the night of surgery and continue them frequently. The nasal saline spray should be used every few hours while awake, and the ointment should be applied 3-4 times/day.

The outside and just inside of the nostrils may need to be cleaned with a Q-tip moistened with warm water or dilute hydrogen peroxide if crusting is present. The antibiotic ointment that you will be prescribed, usually Bacitracin, should be applied to the inside of the nose with a Q-tip. Twist the Q-tip around inside gently; you can go in about as deep as the cotton part or until you feel any resistance. This will help prevent crusting and help you to breathe better. This should be done at least 3 to 4 times a day. You were also prescribed a saline spray. Using pressurized, misting saline spray, such as Simply Saline, is preferred. Be sure to avoid hypertonic saline spray. This can actually dry the nose more.

Soon after the bandage has been removed, the skin on the nose should be cleaned gently in your usual manner twice a day, to remove the oily material that is produced by the skin glands. This will also assist in the reduction of swelling.

DRYNESS OF THE LIPS

If your lips become dry from breathing through your mouth, lip balm or Vaseline may be used. A humidifier with plain water by the bedside at night might be a helpful addition.

TEMPERATURE

Generally, the body temperature does not rise much above 100 degrees following nasal surgery. This rise usually occurs from slight dehydration so remember to drink plenty of fluids. Report any persistent temperature above 100 degrees.

WEAKNESS

It is not unusual for a person who has had an anesthetic or any type of operation to feel weak or dizzy. This gradually clears up in a few days without medication.

MEDICATION

Our office will usually prescribe all your prescriptions to be picked up before your surgery. If not, please contact the office. Almost all patients will be prescribed an antibiotic, pain medication, nausea medication, saline spray, and antibiotic ointment to be taken after surgery. Multivitamins with vitamin C are suggested for the pre- and postoperative periods and can be obtained by you without a prescription. The office will usually provide you with Arnica and Bromelain supplements to start before surgery. These supplements can help prevent/reduce inflammation and bruising.

If you develop a rash or other reaction while you are taking one of the medicines, this could mean that you are developing an allergy to the medicine. If this occurs, please stop taking your medications and call the office immediately.

YOUR FIRST POSTOPERATIVE OFFICE VISIT

The appointment for your first postop visit should be made prior to surgery. This appointment will most probably be for the day after surgery. Sometimes, the first postoperative visit is made for 5-6 days after surgery. Please call the office if you have any questions before your postoperative visit.

POSTOPERATIVE CARE

Following your surgery, we will want to see you in the office at regularly scheduled intervals to monitor your progress.

RESUMING ACTIVITIES

While the bandage is in place, avoid wearing any pull over clothing.

You should **AVOID STRENUOUS ATHLETIC ACTIVITY FOR 3 WEEKS**, including jogging, swimming, aerobics, weightlifting, etc. After 3 weeks, ease back into exercise slowly over the following week. Avoid contact sports for four months.

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

Eyeglasses may be worn while the metal splint remains on the nose. After the splint is removed, glasses must be avoided or otherwise suspended from the forehead for a period of about six weeks. If this is not done, the pressure of your glasses may change the contour of your nose. Your glasses can be suspended from the nose after your splint is removed in three ways. One way is to use a piece of tape to hold the glasses on your forehead so that the weight is off your nose. Another alternative is a "noseguard" (Search "Pro Optics Pro-Nose Guard, For Eyeglass Suspension" on Amazon). We can provide you with further information about any of these alternatives, and our nurses will be happy to discuss these with you to help you choose the option that best fits your needs.

Contact lenses may be worn the day after surgery.

RETURNING TO WORK OR SCHOOL

The average patient can return to work or school the day after the bandage is removed. That will be about five to seven days after your surgery.

Returning to work depends on several factors: the amount of physical activity involved in your position, the amount of public interaction your job requires, and the amount of swelling and discoloration that you may develop. Some patients may feel more comfortable staying home from work for 10-14 days after surgery.

INJURY TO THE NOSE

Some individuals sustain accidents during the early postoperative period. You need not be too concerned unless the blow is hard enough to cause significant bleeding, swelling, or pain. If a blow is sustained while the metal splint is still on, this should help protect the nose. However, for the first five weeks after the nasal splint is removed, more attention should be paid to any injury to the nose. Blows to the nose can cause the nasal bones to become deviated. Please report any accident to the office immediately if you feel it was a significant bump. Otherwise, let us know about it at your next visit.

FINALLY

Remember the things you were told before your operation:

When the bandage is first removed, your nose will appear swollen and may appear turned up too much. This is caused by the operative swelling over the nose and in the upper lip. The swelling will subside to a great extent during the next week. However, remember that it will take up to one or two years for all the swelling to disappear and for your nose to reach its final contour. The discoloration will gradually disappear over a period of seven to ten days, in most cases. The thicker and oilier the skin, and the more significant the surgical maneuvers required, the longer the swelling will take to subside.

The upper lip may seem stiff for some time after surgery, and you may feel that this interferes with your smile. Be patient. This will typically disappear within a few weeks.

The tip of the nose sometimes feels numb after nasal surgery. This will eventually disappear. The upper teeth and palate may tingle or be partially numb as well. This, too, will resolve with time.

If you have any questions, please call us at **(804) 378-7443**. We are always happy to answer your questions, and if you should have a problem, this number is answered 24 hours a day.