

POSTOPERATIVE CARE-OUTPATIENT SURGERY RHINOPLASTY

- **Your first 24 hours**

Someone should stay overnight with you.

- **Position**

Keep your head elevated for the first week or two. Sleep on several pillows or in a recliner. This will help limit swelling. Avoid bleeding at the waist or doing anything too strenuous.

- **Dressings**

Keep your dressings as clean as possible. Do not remove them unless instructed to do so.

- **Nasal Packing**

We use only a small piece of surgicel inside the nose. This is removed the day after surgery. Nonetheless, swelling inside your nose will prevent you from breathing through your nose normally for several weeks.

- **Splint**

We do apply a protective splint to the outside of your nose. Avoid excessive moisture to this area and avoid a “steamy” shower, which can result in premature loss of the splint! We remove the splint on the 7th or 8th day post-op.

When the splint is removed, the nose may appear too turned up or swollen. Most of the swelling will resolve in 2 weeks, although the remainder may take up to one year to completely resolve. The thicker and oilier the skin the longer it takes for the swelling to resolve. Your upper lip may feel stiff and your smile may feel abnormal for a few weeks due to internal swelling.

- **Dried Blood in the Nostrils**

You may use saline nasal spray (over the counter) inside your nose several times daily to loosen secretions. Also, Polysporin Ointment applied inside the nostril will help eliminate dried secretions. Do not blow your nose, as this may lead to bleeding.

- **Incisions**

Access to the structure supporting the nose is gained through an incision across the columella (structure dividing the nostrils). Several small sutures are used to close this incision. Sutures are left in place for 4-5 days. There is also a small incision inside each nostril; however, the sutures inside the nose will dissolve on their own. Rarely is it necessary to reduce the size of the nostril. This may require a separate incision.

- **Nasal Drainage**

Expect drainage tinged with blood for a few days. If there is active drainage then we ask that you apply the nasal drip pad as instructed by our office. Do not rub or wipe the base of your nose as this might lead to infection.

- **Swelling**

Swelling and even bruising around the eyes will occur to some degree after all nasal procedures. The good news is that most of it will not be apparent after 7-10 days. Of course, there will be some swelling of the nose itself for as much as 6-12 months.

- **Ice**

Gauze pads soaked in ice water and applied under the eyes can be helpful in limiting swelling if used for the first day or two. This also makes you more comfortable, but do not over chill your skin!

- **Pain**

Expect a mild headache. Contact us for any severe discomfort. Remember pain medication can cause nausea, drowsiness, impair driving, and can cause constipation. Use only if necessary. Try extra strength Tylenol after a few days as a substitute.

- **Blowing Your Nose**

You may blow your nose once the splint is removed but not before, i.e., 7-8 days.

- **Temperature**

Generally there is a slight rise in body temperature immediately after any type of surgery. It is important to drink plenty of liquids to avoid dehydration. You should report any persistent temperature above 101 degrees.

- **Showering and Bathing**

You should wash the treated area twice daily and remove all ointment and creams. Pat the area dry and reapply the medicated ointment prescribed. It is best to use moist cotton balls for this purpose. Avoid rubbing or aggressive cleaning of your face at all times. Standing in the shower 2-3 times a day may be helpful as well.

- **Clothing**

Wear clothing that is easily removed-preferably shorts that button in the front.

- **Activities**

We want you to avoid straining or any aerobic activity for at least 3 weeks after surgery. This is to avoid bleeding, bruising, and swelling. Do not resume strenuous exercise for 4 to 6 weeks. The physician will give you clearance to increase your activities according to the progress of your recovery.

- **Sun**

Avoid sun or tanning bed exposure to your nose for the first month.

If fresh scars are exposed to the sun, they will tend to become darker and take longer to fade. Sunscreen can help. Take extra care and precautions if the area operated on is slightly numb---you might not "feel" sunburn developing!

- **Swimming**

Avoid swimming for the first month.

- **Driving**

You may resume driving 7-10 days after surgery. Keep in mind that you must have full use of your reflexes. If pain will inhibit them, don't drive.

- **Sexual Activity**

You may enjoy sexual activity as your body allows with certain restrictions.

(Refer to back to activity)

- **Diet**

If you have any postoperative nausea, carbonated sodas and dry crackers may settle the stomach. If nausea is severe, let us know as soon as possible. If you feel normal, start with liquids and bland foods, and if those are well tolerated, progress to a regular diet.

- **Smoking**

Smoking reduces capillary flow in your skin. We advise you not to smoke at all during the first 15 days after surgery.

- **Alcohol**

Alcohol dilates the blood vessels and could increase postoperative bleeding. Please do not drink until you have stopped taking the prescription pain pills, as the combination of pain pills and alcohol can be dangerous.

- **Returning To Work**

The average person usually returns to work or to a social schedule in 2-3 weeks. However, there is considerable variation in healing and occasionally a full month is required.

- **Post Operative Appointments**

It is very important that you follow the schedule of appointments we establish after surgery.

- **Finally**

If you have excessive bleeding or pain, call the office at 859-254-5665, day or night.