

# Nasal Surgery

Now that you have had surgery, you will need to know how to care for yourself at home. This information sheet will give general instructions to promote healing and prevent problems.

## What to Expect After Surgery

### **Bleeding / Drainage**

- It is normal to have blood and/or blood-tinged drainage for several days after nasal surgery.
- You will have a small dressing under your nose to absorb the drainage. This is often called a “drip pad”. This dressing will be changed as necessary.
- You may remove and throw away your drip pad once the bleeding has stopped.
- You may feel nauseated and vomit dark blood after surgery. This is common because blood drains down the back of your throat during surgery.

### **Packing**

- You may have some packing in your nostrils to prevent bleeding. You will have to breathe through your mouth until the packing is removed.
- Depending on your doctor’s wishes, this packing will be removed before you are discharged from hospital or the next day.

### **Swelling / Bruising**

- Your nose may feel “stuffed up”. This is due to the swelling that occurs after surgery. This stuffy feeling usually improves over a week.
- Nasal cosmetic surgery (for example, rhinoplasty) is normally associated with blackening of the eyes. This will usually decrease in 10 to 14 days.

### **Pain**

- You may have some discomfort for the first 5-7 days but this is rarely severe. Your doctor will tell you what medication you can take to relieve this type of pain.
- **Do not take Aspirin or Aspirin products for pain as this may cause bleeding.**

### **Cast / Splint**

Depending on the type of surgery you have done, you may have a small cast or splint on your nose with tape passing under the tip of your nose.

- Do **not** touch or remove the cast/splint or tapes under any circumstances.
- Keep the cast/splint and tapes dry.
- As the swelling in your nose goes down, the cast/splint will feel loose.
- Your doctor will tell you when the cast/splint can be removed.
- Do not shower until your cast/splint is removed.

## Discharge Instructions

- Avoid anti-histamine medicines as they will “dry” the mucous membranes in your nose.
- Avoid bending over and doing any heavy lifting (anything over 4.5 kg or 10 pounds) for at least one week.
- Do **not** participate in any strenuous activities or exercise for at least one week. Check with your doctor when you can resume these activities. You should also avoid contact sports as you may injure your nose.
- You may bathe or shower as directed by your doctor.
- Do **not** blow your nose for at least one week. After that you may blow your nose gently.
- Try to avoid sneezing. If you cannot avoid this, sneeze with your mouth open.
- Some crusts may form on your nose which can be uncomfortable. Do **not** pick at your nose to remove these crusts. You may gently put some Polysporin®/Vaseline® on the rim of your nostrils.
- Do **not** use nose drops or saline irrigations unless advised by your doctor otherwise.
- Use a cool mist humidifier to help keep the mucous membranes in your nose moist.
- You can apply ice packs to your nose to help reduce swelling and relieve pain. Leave the ice pack on for 20 minutes and off for 20 minutes at a time (a small bag of frozen peas works well).
- Use a semi-sitting position rather than lying down. This will ease your breathing and help prevent swelling and bruising.
- Drink extra fluids the first couple of days to keep your mouth moist.
- You can eat a regular diet unless otherwise instructed.
- Make a follow-up appointment with your doctor as instructed.

## Warning Signs and Symptoms

**If you experience any of the following, call your doctor or go to the nearest Emergency Department:**

- spitting up or swallowing large amounts of bright red blood **or** bleeding from the nose that will not stop
- feeling feverish or having a temperature of 38° C (100.4° F) or higher
- drainage from the nose which is yellow or green or foul smelling
- increased pain or pain that is not relieved with pain medication
- developing a severe headache that is not relieved with pain medication
- complete blockage of the nasal passages (nostrils) after you have had some improvement breathing through your nostrils
- difficulty breathing (after the packing has been removed)

## Additional Information

The following teaching booklets are available from the Peter Lougheed Centre Library (943-4737) or the Rockyview Hospital Library (943-3488)

- *Nasal Surgery* Krames Communications
- *Endoscopic Sinus Surgery* Krames Communications

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*This material is designed for information purposes only. It should not be used in place of medical advice, instruction and/or treatment. If you have specific questions, please consult your doctor or appropriate health care professional.*