

# Sinus Surgery

## Post-Operative Care Instructions

Following these instructions will ensure the best possible outcome for you after your sinus surgery.

### What to Expect Post Surgery

After surgery, you'll be monitored for an hour or two as you begin to wake up from the anesthesia. You'll likely feel groggy and experience mild pain as you wake up.

As soon as the anesthesia has worn off and you no longer feel groggy and can drink fluids and find your pain levels manageable, you can go home. For most patients, this occurs the same day after surgery; however, for others, your doctor may advise you to stay overnight for further observation, especially if you have pre-existing medical conditions that are of concern post-op, and to get your levels of pain under control.

It's not uncommon to experience the following symptoms after your sinus surgery:

- Slight oozing and bloody drainage from the nose
- Discomfort and pressure around your nose and face
- Minor congestion or feeling of fullness similar to a sinus infection
- Slight swelling of the nasal passages
- Difficulty breathing when laying down
- Slight headache
- Disrupted sleep

If you experience heavy bleeding or severe swelling in your eyes, as well as significant headaches and vomiting, contact your ENT doctor right away.

## Nasal Care Post Surgery

Proper sinus care and medication use are critical to a successful recovery after your sinus surgery.

### Begin irrigating your nasal passages

- Spray your nose with a saline spray beginning either the night of your surgery or the morning after—this is an essential step to successfully healing your nasal cavity after sinus surgery.
- Your doctor will provide instructions on the number of sprays and frequency, as well as the type of sinus spray that's right for you.

### Resume your daily medications

- You will be prescribed pain medication for use after surgery. This can include prescription-strength pain medication for patients experiencing severe pain.
- For mild to moderate pain, or for patients who would prefer a non-narcotic alternative, acetaminophen such as Tylenol or ibuprofen like Advil will be prescribed. Follow the instructions on the bottle.
- Do not, however, take any products that contain aspirin or blood thinners such as warfarin until discussed with your doctor both prior and post-surgery.
- Avoid using medicated (steroid) nasal sprays until your doctor indicates otherwise.
- Follow the course of antibiotics that your ENT physician may prescribe.

## Your Activity Level

Even though sinus surgery is a minimally invasive procedure, we recommend you take at least a week off from work or school in order to recover.

In addition, you should also follow these important instructions post-surgery:

- Reduce your physical activity: This means not exerting yourself with strenuous activity and workouts, including cycling, tennis, jogging, swimming (chlorine can irritate your sinuses), or any group sports for at least two weeks. You should also avoid lifting anything heavy like weights or groceries.
- Do not blow your nose: Your doctor will let you know when it's safe to do so. If your nose leaks, dab it gently with a tissue for relief. If you feel the need to cough or sneeze, do so through your mouth.
- Sleep with your head elevated: You will likely experience congestion/stuffiness immediately after surgery which will make laying down a challenge. Instead, prop your pillow up and keep your head elevated for three to four days post-surgery. Not only will this help with your breathing, but this position will help decrease the swelling in your face as well.
- Do not use a CPAP machine: Your doctor will let you know when it's safe to do so. Instead, sleep with your head elevated until you can resume CPAP use.

## The First Week After Surgery

You will have your first postoperative visit with your ENT physician the first week after your surgery. This will include a cleaning known as a sinus debridement to make sure that you heal correctly after surgery—your doctor may perform this procedure with topical anesthesia or require you to take pain medication at least 30 minutes before your appointment.

During your visit, you will also be asked a series of questions to determine your current symptoms. Your doctor may also perform a physical exam like a nasal endoscopy to view your nasal cavity to check for bloody crusts, scar tissue, or any adverse effects that could delay your healing.

Following your visit and debridement, you may experience a bit of bleeding. When this occurs, sit up in an elevated position and tilt your head backward. Then, breathe gently through your nose as your sinuses naturally clear themselves up—you will also see thick brown drainage, which is a combination of old blood and nasal mucus, and is expected.

In addition, continue to do the following for at least two weeks post-surgery:

- Do not blow your nose. If you need to sneeze or cough, do so gently through your mouth.
- Refrain from strenuous activity as this can increase your risk of bleeding and swelling. You can, however, resume light walking and your daily activities in order to stay active and reduce the risk of blood clots developing in your leg.
- You may experience nausea or an upset stomach—mainly if you've been prescribed antibiotics. Take a probiotic or incorporate some yogurt with active-cultures into your diet for the duration of your medications.

## From the Second Week

After your second week post-surgery, you will most likely receive the okay from your doctor to resume physical exercise at full intensity.

You will continue with office visits for regular debridement and physical exams up to six weeks after surgery. It can take up to eight weeks post-surgery for the lining of your sinus to completely heal—post-operative appointments play an essential part in your healing journey and should not be skipped.

## Important

Call our practice or go to the emergency room immediately if you experience any of the following symptoms after your surgery:

- Fever higher than 100.5 degrees Fahrenheit
- Clear, watery drainage from your nose that's unrelated to the salt water rinse
- Swelling in your eyes and any noticeable changes to your vision
- Severe headache
- Stiffness in your neck
- Severe vomiting and nausea
- Diarrhea
- Bright red bleeding from the nose that lasts for more than 24 hours

During office hours, from **X AM to X PM, Monday to Friday: XXX-XXX-XXXX**

After hours, call **911** for any possible emergency situation.