



POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

RHINOPLASTY

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

These instructions should be carefully read and followed. They are designed to answer the most commonly asked questions regarding postoperative care.

ACTIVITY THE FIRST WEEK

Limit activity sharply over the first week following surgery. You are encouraged to walk about the house, but avoid bending at the waist or picking up heavy objects. If you over-exert yourself bleeding may result. We ask that you not drive for one week following surgery. When you rest or sleep, keep your head elevated on 2-3 pillows and try to avoid turning on your side. Keep your emotions under control. It is not unusual to feel a bit depressed for a few days after surgery. This quickly passes as you begin to look and feel better. Anger or crying will only add to swelling or initiate bleeding. Restrict your diet to plenty of fluids and easily chewable foods. Hard to chew foods like steak should be avoided for one week.

You may carefully clean about the nostril with a Q-tip and peroxide once a day. Immediately afterwards place a bit of antibiotic ointment in your nostrils to keep them from drying out. Swelling for at least two weeks will obstruct the nasal passages. A humidifier may help you sleep by allowing you to breathe through your mouth more comfortably.

Do not blow your nose or sniff excessively as this will only irritate the healing tissues. If you sneeze, open your mouth. Also, avoid picking up babies or small children; a flailing little arm may strike your nose. You probably will bump the nose once or more during the first week. This will hurt, but cause no problem unless the force is excessive.

With assistance you may bathe in a tub. Showering is allowed on the second post-op day. Cover the nasal cast so that it remains dry. It is all right to carefully wash your face with a mild soap and clean washcloth or cotton balls.

Avoid cigarette smoking or even being in an area of excessive smoke as this irritates the nose tissues and impedes healing. Also avoid alcoholic beverages the first two weeks following surgery as this may increase your chance of bleeding.

ACTIVITY AFTER THE FIRST WEEK

It takes six weeks for the nasal bones to fully heal. Slowly begin your activity. After the first week let your body tell you how much to do. Strenuous exercises may be resumed in 5-6 weeks. Build up to this level slowly. Semi-contact sports are to be avoided for 4-6 weeks. Full swimming is allowed after six weeks.

Do not let your nose become sunburned for six months after surgery or nasal injections. This may result in prolonged swelling and erythema (redness).

PAIN, SWELLING, BREATHING, BRUISING

The first day or two you will have some bleeding. Do not swallow the blood, as it will make you nauseated. Most patients complain more of discomfort from nasal and sinus congestion than from pain. Any pain should be controlled via the prescribed medications. After the first day, the pain may subside enough so that plain Tylenol will be sufficient. If not, give us a call. Swelling and bruising about the eyes and cheeks is variable. Swelling maximizes at about two days and subsides over the next 5-6 days. Do not worry if you have excess swelling about the eyes and cheeks. This will clear completely and not adversely affect the results. Bruising or discoloration may persist for a few days longer. Remember, all this subsides in time and has no bearing on the results.

BLEEDING

It is normal to have some bleeding over the first 12 hours after surgery. It may be necessary to change the gauze drip pad a dozen or so times over that period. It is normal to have a pinkish reddish discharge from your nose and throat for the first 3-4 days. This will gradually subside. If you have profuse nasal bleeding after this time, immediately lie down with your head elevated on 3-4 pillows. Iced washcloths to the back of the neck and over the eyes may help. Give us a call if these measures do not suffice. If the cast has been removed, forego the "finger on nose exercises" until you check with us.

MEDICATIONS

Avoid medications that contain aspirin or ibuprofen for 2-3 weeks after surgery. Both pain and sleeping medications are prescribed. Take them as needed. After the first 24 hours Extra Strength Tylenol may be sufficient. Remember pain and sleep medications may impair your reactions, so avoid driving or other hazardous activities for 24 hours after taking them. If the prescribed medications do not control your symptoms, please call on us. Nausea may occasionally be related to the above medications. Small amounts of clear fluid at frequent intervals may help. If this is not effective call us. Itching under the cast may occur and can be controlled by appropriate medications.

INFECTION

Infection is unusual after rhinoplasty but occasionally occurs with fever over 100°F. Excessive pain, and swelling with redness may signify a developing nasal infection and should be reported. Infections generally clear up quickly and appropriately with an antibiotic treatment.

POSTOPERATIVE VISITS

You will be given a card noting your return appointment upon discharge from the surgical center. Any sutures may be removed when the nose is cleansed. It is 3-5 days after surgery and then again 6-8 days after surgery the cast is removed. When the cast is removed the nose will be quite swollen and the nasal tip will be turned up. This will settle down a lot over the next few days and more gradually thereafter. Nasal "exercises" will then be demonstrated if indicated. These are done to keep the size of the nose narrow and in proper alignment. They should be done 15-20 times a day and held for 30 seconds. They are to be continued for about six weeks. Remember that the nose does not assume its final shape until many months after the surgery depending on the type of nasal skin you have. It will probably look better than prior to the operation within 2-3 weeks, but the final result takes longer, be patient. Occasionally an injection is necessary to reduce swelling in one area.

We hope the above information will help you during your postoperative period. Remember to call on us if you have any questions, as our concern is to give you the best possible care.