

TESTfacts

An Educational Health Series From National Jewish Health®



Endoscopic Sinus Surgery Postoperative Care

Postoperative Care

Now that your endoscopic sinus surgery is done, you will need to begin the postoperative care phase of your treatment. **This is very important for your surgery to be completely successful. Please follow the guidelines below:**

Wound Care

- Do not blow your nose for 1 week following surgery. If you feel the need to sneeze, do not try to hold it back. Instead sneeze with your mouth open.
- You may have some bleeding from the nose for several days after surgery and for a brief time after the first several office visits. If bleeding occurs, tilt your head back slightly and breathe gently through the nose. You may dab your nose gently with tissue. Nasal sprays that you purchase over the counter (Afrin® or Neosynephrine® nasal spray) may be used to help control bothersome nasal bleeding. However, these are nasal decongestant sprays and you may only use them for 2-3 days. If used longer, you will have worsening congestion. If bleeding continues for a long time, please call us.
- You may notice some dark brown nasal discharge for several weeks after your surgery. This is old blood and mucus being cleared from the sinuses and is normal. Also, thick yellow or white drainage is common. This does not mean you have a sinus infection.
- Sinus rinse nasal wash – A nasal wash of the nose and sinuses with saline (salt solution) is a very important part of the postoperative care for most patients. The irrigations should be started on the first day after surgery. They are done twice a day unless instructed differently. This cuts down on the degree of sinus cleaning required during the return visits and helps speed-up healing. Many patients find it helpful to do these nasal washes more than twice a day.

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- We prefer you use the Sinus Rinse Kit (Neil Med) for your nasal wash. You can purchase these Sinus Rinse Kits at National Jewish Health or most retail drug and grocery stores.
- Do not try to clean the inside of your nose or remove any type of material from your nose. Some patients will have sutures (stiches) or packing (less common) that only your doctor should remove.

Medicines

- You may be given prescriptions for antibiotic and/or oral steroids for several weeks to treat infection and swelling. Take them as directed. If you develop severe diarrhea, stop your antibiotics and contact us.
- You will receive a prescription for a pain reliever. Take your pain medicine as directed and as needed. We recommend taking a dose of pain medicine about 45 minutes before your first postoperative visit. A sinus cleaning (debridement) may need to be performed at each of the early visits. You will need someone to drive you to and from these visits if you are taking a pain reliever that contains a narcotic.
- Some patients find that extra-strength Tylenol® (500 mg) is enough to relieve their pain. Do not take both Tylenol® and your prescription pain reliever unless we give you specific instructions to do so. Some prescription pain relievers also have Tylenol® in them.
- Do not take any aspirin or products that contain aspirin. Do not take NSAIDS (Motrin®, Advil®, Aleve®, ibuprofen) for the first week after your surgery. These medicines may cause bleeding. Ask us or your pharmacist if you are unsure about a medicine.
- Do not restart your topical nasal steroid or antihistamine sprays, including Pulmicort® nasal washes until we tell you to do so.
- If you use a CPAP or Bipap machine at night, do not resume use until we tell you to do so.

Activity

- Plan on taking several days to 1 week off from work to recover from surgery. The time may need to be longer if you have a strenuous job.
- Avoid exercise and limit any exertion for at least 2 week following surgery. This includes no bending, lifting (more than 10 pounds) or straining. Your surgeon will be able to advise you when it is safe to begin exercising again.
- Do **not** fly anywhere or swim for 2 weeks. Do not SCUBA dive for 4 weeks.

When to call the doctor

If you have the following symptoms or have questions **please call National Jewish Health at 303-388-1355. Choose option 4.**

- Temperature of 101.5 degrees F or higher that lasts longer than 24 hours
- Severe pain not controlled by your pain medicine
- Changes in your vision or headaches that keep getting worse
- Facial bruising
- Nasal bleeding that continue after using Afrin® or Neosynephrine® nasal sprays
- Neck stiffness, nausea and vomiting.