

## SEPTAL & TURBINATE SURGERY Patient Instructions

If your nose is blocked by a crooked or deviated septum, surgery is often necessary to resolve normal nasal function. As with any surgery, you run a slight risk of infection and bleeding. When incisions are required, your risks also include numbness in your front teeth and scarring. Your physician will discuss any additional risks, which differ, depending on the type and location of your surgery.

### BEFORE SURGERY

Here are a few things you can do before surgery to help things go more smoothly:

- Purchase a Neil Med® Sinus Rinse Kit with bottle for salt water rinses you will do after surgery.
- Eliminate aspirin products 2 weeks before surgery. Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, Aleve) should be stopped 5 days before surgery.
- Tell your doctor about any medications you are taking and ask whether you should take them the morning of surgery.
- Stop smoking at least 3 weeks before your surgery date.
- Arrange for a ride home after the procedure.

### DURING SURGERY

Expect the procedure to last from 30 to 45 minutes. It can be done either under local anesthesia with sedation or under general anesthesia. The obstructing nasal cartilage and bone is repositioned or partially removed to make nasal breathing easier. This surgery is not intended to alter the outer appearance of the nose, but occasionally, subtle changes occur.

### AFTER SURGERY

You can expect some nasal stuffiness and crusting for 3-6 weeks after surgery. Many patients are back to work or school the week following surgery. Following these suggestions can you prevent complications and feel better soon.

#### **The First Few Days**

- Change the gauze bandage under your nose (if present) as needed. Discontinue when the drainage stops.
- Sleep with your upper body elevated to keep pressure off of your head.
- Use pain medication as directed by your doctor or a mild non-aspirin pain reliever (Tylenol).
- Take any additional medications prescribed by your doctor.
- Drink plenty of fluids to prevent dry mouth. A bedside humidifier may be helpful.

- To help control any bothersome nasal bleeding, an icepack can be applied over the nose and cheeks. Tilt your head forward while sitting up and breathe gently through your nose. Do not snort the blood through your nose as this will promote more bleeding. If bleeding continues, Afrin or Neosynephrine nasal decongestant spray may be used sparingly every 6 to 8 hours.

### **The First Few Weeks**

- Use salt water (saline) rinses beginning 1 to 2 days after surgery to wash away any crust and surgical debris. Use the Neil Med® Saline Rinse in the bottle to squirt the solution into your nose a few times a day. Afrin or Neosynephrine nasal decongestant spray will open the nasal passage and may be used just before rinsing with salt water.
- Your doctor may recommend that you use a nasal steroid spray 15-30 minutes after using the salt-water rinse.
- You will need several visits after surgery to clear out old blood and mucus. During these visits, any persistent inflammation or scar tissue will be removed under local anesthesia. For your comfort, we recommend that you take a dose of your prescribed pain reliever immediately before these visits. (Do not take pain medications on an empty stomach).
- For several weeks, you will have some thick brown drainage from your nose. This occurs as the sinuses begin to clear themselves. This is normal. It does not indicate an infection.
- Take it easy and avoid bending, straining, and exercise for at least 1 week. No vigorous activity is allowed until healing is complete, usually in about 2 weeks.
- Severe diarrhea from antibiotic usage can be a sign of a serious medical problem. If this occurs, stop taking the antibiotic.

### **Important Tips**

- Cough and sneeze with your mouth open.
- Do not blow your nose during the first week. During that time, if you have congestion, sniff gently and spit into a tissue.
- Avoid hot, spicy foods.
- Do not drink through a straw.

### **CALL YOUR DOCTOR IF:**

- You are bleeding excessively.
- You have signs of an infection such as fever, yellow-green drainage, unrelieved headache, or increased pain.
- You have decreased or double vision, swelling of the eyes, a stiff neck, or extreme fatigue.
- You have clear watery drainage from your nose.

(02/10)