



WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER SEPTOPLASTY SURGERY

1. General Information

You and your physician have decided that you would benefit from a Septoplasty. Septoplasty is an outpatient surgical procedure. This procedure is done through the nose with no external incisions or cutting. The goal of this procedure is to surgically correct a nasal deviation. This will enhance your nasal breathing.

2. Nasal Drainage

Right after surgery, you will have drainage from your nose. There may be a small amount of bright red bleeding, but do not be alarmed. A small amount is normal and may continue through the week. A gauze dressing will be placed on your upper lip to absorb this drainage. On the day of surgery it may be necessary to change the dressing several times. If bleeding does occur, place an ice pack over the nose. At the same time place an ice cube in your mouth; let it melt. Any bright red bleeding that lasts more than ten minutes, or is heavy, should be reported to your doctor immediately. Old blood, which accumulated during surgery, is dark reddish-brown. It will drain for a week or more. It is of no concern.

3. Nasal Congestion

For the first week after surgery, your head will feel stuffy. This is due to swelling of the mucous membranes in your nose. This is normal and expected. The stuffiness will gradually decrease over the next few weeks, so please be patient. After this, you should notice an improvement in your nasal breathing.

4. Nasal Packing

Packing may be removed the day of surgery before you are discharged. If nasal packing is left in your nose, it will be removed in 1-4 days. This packing keeps the nasal septum straight and prevents bleeding. Do not remove this packing.

5. Discomfort After Surgery

There is some discomfort after surgery. If a pain medication is prescribed, take as ordered. If none was ordered, take acetaminophen (Tylenol) according to package directions. **DO NOT TAKE ASPIRIN OR MEDICATIONS WHICH CONTAINS ASPIRIN.** These products may cause bleeding. For additional pain relief place an ice mask or cool washcloth over your eyes and forehead for the first 24-36 hours after surgery.

6. Post-Operative Visits

You will have 2 to 3 post-operative visits. The purpose of these visits is to clean and examine the operative site. This helps the healing and improves nasal breathing. If packing is left in your nose, it will be removed at your first post-operative visit with minimal discomfort. If packing is not left in your nose, your first visit will be 5 to 7 days after surgery. If everything is healing well, your last visit will be 10 to 14 days later.

General Precautions:

1. Activity

Even though your surgery may seem minor, your body needs additional rest for healing. You should stay at home for one day. Observe for bleeding during that time. Call your doctor immediately if you have any bright red bleeding which lasts longer than 10 minutes or if bleeding is heavy. If the surgery is done under local anesthesia, you should gradually increase your activities over 3 to 4 days. If general anesthesia is used, increase your activities over a one week period. Most people return to work within 4 to 5 days after surgery.

2. Do Not Blow Your Nose

It is important that you do not blow your nose. Blowing the nose may cause bleeding. You may sniff back secretions. You may gently blow your nose after the first post-op visit.

3. Sneezing

If you must sneeze, do so with your mouth open. Sneezing through your mouth reduces pressure and discomfort of the operative site.

4. Do Not Lift Heavy Objects

Avoid bending over and lifting heavy objects (over 5 pounds) during the first two to three weeks after surgery. These activities place pressure on the operative site and may cause bleeding.

5. No Straws.

SUGGESTIONS FOR COMFORT

1. When resting, keep your head elevated on three pillows. This position will help you feel more comfortable because it helps to decrease swelling. It also allows for better drainage of nasal discharge.
2. Use a cool vapor humidifier at your bedside the first week after surgery. This will help loosen secretions and prevent from crusting.
3. Three times a day, place a "fingertip" of Bacitracin ointment along the incision in the left nostril. This will help prevent infection.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call your doctor at 708-216-9183, Monday through Friday, 9:00a.m. to 4:00p.m. or on the weekend, call the Loyola University Physicians' Answering Service (24 hours) at 708-216-800, or go to an emergency room which is closest to you.

If you would like to speak with a nurse, please call the Department of Otolaryngology at 708-216-9183 Monday through Friday, 9:00a.m. to 4:00p.m.