

Sinus Surgery

General Information: Expect nasal stuffiness, decreased sense of smell, and “head cold” type symptoms with increased mucus drainage, mild headache, and throat irritation. There will likely be some soreness just inside the nostrils, at the tip of the nose, or in the upper teeth. It is also common to feel somewhat tired after sinus surgery.

Activity: Bed rest and light activity is the rule for the first 24 hours postoperatively. You may increase your activity level as necessary, but use common sense. Avoid any heavy lifting, bending, straining, or stooping for at least 2 weeks after surgery as this may cause bleeding. Light exercise may begin approximately 10 days after surgery. Try to keep your head elevated during sleep for at least 3 days after surgery. Sleeping on 2 or more pillows is effective. A recliner chair is an excellent option. Most patients are able to return to school or work within 48 hours postoperatively. It is okay to shower or bathe postoperatively. Avoid particularly hot or steamy showers for several days after surgery. Treat your nose with care. Avoid situations that might result in any trauma to your nose.

Diet: Begin with a liquid or soft diet for 24 hours, then advance to regular foods as soon as comfortable.

Medication: Pain is usually minimal, though varies from individual to individual. Tylenol (acetaminophen) by itself is an excellent choice for mild discomfort. For more significant pain, use the pain medication prescribed. Do not take the prescription pain medication and Tylenol at the same time. **Avoid aspirin products for the next 2 weeks.** Antibiotics may also be given during the postoperative period and should be taken if any nasal packing material is in place.

Wound Care: Avoid blowing your nose. If you have to sneeze, try to keep your mouth open. It is not unusual to experience some nasal bleeding during the first several days after surgery. For this reason, a nasal drip pad may be applied postoperatively. The recovery room nurse can give you some gauze to take home so that this can be changed as frequently as necessary. Bleeding usually tapers off during the first 24 hours. Sometimes you may have to change the nasal drip pad several times within an hour, but overall the frequency should decrease after a 24-hour period. If heavier bleeding occurs, it is best to keep the head elevated and apply an ice pack to the nose. Usually this will suffice; however, if bleeding continues, Afrin (oxymetazoline) nose spray may be applied and repeated several times as necessary. If the bleeding still persists, we recommend that you contact the office. It is not unusual to cough up a bit of bloody phlegm or secretions for the first couple of weeks after surgery. You may gently clean the tip of the nose with a Q-tip and peroxide as often as necessary.

Contact Information: The Otolaryngology nurse can be reached at (603) 650-4399 and can answer any additional concerns or questions you may have in the post-operative period. The Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center operator can be reached at (603) 650-5000.

Follow-up: You should already have an appointment scheduled approximately 1-2 weeks after surgery in Otolaryngology clinic for your first post-operative visit. If you need to confirm the appointment, please contact my secretary at (603) 650-8123.