

Rhinoplasty Post Operative Care

This operation may be done in conjunction with a septoplasty, turbinate reduction or endoscopic sinus surgery.

When you wake from surgery you will have a blocked nose and a dressing beneath the nose to catch any ooze. There will be an external plastic splint and tapes that will be removed 1 week post surgery. Most stitches that are used in rhinoplasty are dissolvable and do not need to be removed.

Ice packs may be used over the eyes to lessen bruising in the first day or two but some bruising is expected in all patients. Be careful not to put pressure on the nose with ice packs. Freezable face masks are a good idea for the first week. The extent and duration of bruising is highly variable. Swelling usually peaks around day 5 but is variable. The tip of the nose may also be numb for some time but this is normal and will recover. Due to swelling after surgery some areas may look a little asymmetrical. Don't worry this is normal as different parts of the nose swell slightly differently.

Diet

Eat light foods such as jelly or soup for the first 24 hours as tolerated. Drink as much water or fluids as you can tolerate without feeling sick. If the nose is completely blocked it may be easier to drink fluids with a straw.

Pain management and antibiotics

Rhinoplasty is generally uncomfortable but after a few days the nose shouldn't be too painful. Take your prescribed medications as ordered by your surgeon. If pain is severe and not relieved by your prescription medication, call the office for advice.

Some pain medicine (Panadeine Forte or Oxycodone in particular) can make you dizzy or constipated. Avoid driving if you feel affected by the medication. Laxatives from the chemist may be needed for a few days if bowel habit is a problem. If you feel nauseated, you may benefit from reducing your strong pain killers.

Avoid aspirin or other blood thinning medications for at least 2 weeks after nasal surgery. You will generally be prescribed an antibiotic to help prevent or manage an infection. Make sure you complete the course prescribed.

Caring for your nose and dressings

Don't blow your nose until your first office visit. The nose will be cleansed by using saline sprays. If you sneeze, do so with your mouth open. The nose will feel congested for 1-2 weeks and occasionally longer. This may cause a temporary increase in snoring or bad breath. Avoid smoking before or after surgery to give your nose the best opportunity to heal and minimise bleeding.

Avoid getting the dressings on your face wet. A cool face washer is all that is needed. Avoid baths that can increase swelling and bleeding. Keep showers lukewarm and avoid wetting the hair. If really necessary, washing hair in a basin at the hairdresser can be done.

Sleeping on your back is recommended to avoid pressure on the nose. A curved pillow like those used on air flights are handy. It is very important you don't sleep on your stomach as it can easily distort the nose as it heals.

Your nose will nearly always have some dissolvable dressing in it after the procedure. These dressings are made of cellulose and are meant to turn black. Sometimes this may dislodge and come out from the nostril. This is ok. If it is bothering you it may be pushed back in or gently trimmed. Don't try to pull on the dissolvable dressing. It is there to provide support to the healing nose.

Nasal splints (thin rubber sheeting in the nose) are very commonly used in rhinoplasty surgery. They will be removed at the first post op visit (usually 1 week after surgery). They are held in with a single stitch which is easily removed at the first visit.

It's advisable to avoid sun exposure to the nose for at least 6 weeks after the procedure. SPF50 sunscreen and a hat is advisable when going outside.

Bleeding

A small amount of blood stained discharge is normal for the first few days after surgery. If the bleeding becomes heavier, contact the office.

Saline

Saline sprays prescribed after surgery help dissolve the soluble packing placed in the nose. The more you use the better. Three to four puffs a day are recommended. After the first post op visit saline rinses may be recommended for a few weeks.

Exercise

Rest as much as you can in the first week. Keep your head elevated on 3 or 4 pillows. It is important to sit upright when you are not in bed to avoid facial swelling and pain. Exercise is not a good idea in the first fortnight but gentle walking can be started in the second week. Strenuous activity is OK after 4-6 weeks.

Time off work

1 week is generally sufficient if work is not strenuous. Occasionally 2 weeks is needed though this depends on the individual and their work environment. If you need a medical or a carer's certificate, contact your surgeon's secretary via email.

Glasses

It is important to keep glasses off the bridge of the nose for 6 weeks, while the nasal bones are setting into their final position.. This may require taping of the frames to your forehead. Contact lenses are recommended if available during this time.

Rhinoplasty outcomes

The shape of the nose will take several weeks to settle and swelling to subside. Initially the nasal tip will be very swollen. Do not worry - this is normal. The majority of nasal swelling will be gone at 3 months but the final result may not be evident for 6-12 months. It is important to be patient.

Things to report to your surgeon

- High temperature (>38.5 degrees Celsius), or chills
- Excessive pain or vomiting
- Excessive swelling of or around your surgery area
- Troublesome bleeding
- Dark or dusky skin around the tip or around the stitches

How to contact me

During business hours - 9895 0400 or via the email used to communicate with you (my PA)

After hours (in case of emergency) - via the hospital that conducted the procedure:

Vic Parade Surgical Centre : 9650 4000

St.Vincent's Hospital East Melbourne: 9928 6555

Lastly, via the on-call Registrar at *St.Vincent's Public Hospital: 9231 2211*