

Rhinoplasty

You have just had a “rhinoplasty” or surgery on your nose. There are incisions inside your nose and, a small incision on the tissue between your nostrils. All your incisions, inside and outside, have been closed with dissolving sutures. The cartilage in your nose, and often the bones, have been divided, then reshaped and repositioned. There is no packing in your nose, instead they place a molded plastic “cast” glued to the outside of your nose. The purpose of the cast is to hold the cartilage and bone in their new position while they heal together, to minimize any swelling that you have, and protect your new nose.

This guide provides instructions for the care of your new nose and answers questions you may have while healing. Please keep these instructions on hand for at least the next month as a reference source. Don’t hesitate to call our office (see below) if you have any questions not answered here.

Activities

- For the 1st and 2nd night, please sleep on your back with your head elevated on two pillows. Sleeping in a recliner chair is ideal. If you sleep on your side your nose will swell closed on the “down” side. Continuing to sleep on your back with your head slightly elevated for the next week is preferred.
- Please keep ice packs across the plastic cast on your nose and both of your eyes for the first 24 hours or so after surgery. 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off, or as tolerated, should suffice. This is to help prevent bruising of your eyes, minimize swelling of your nose and face, and to generally make you more comfortable.
- You may sniff backwards through your nose at any time. Please don’t blow your nose for a week after surgery.
- Do not place yourself in any situation that may potentially harm your nose for at least 3 weeks following surgery.
- We recommend no aerobic activity, heaving lifting (including a child), straining, or bending forward for at least 1 week, slowly returning to full activities over the next 2 weeks. Please consult our staff if you have any questions concerning a specific activity.
- We recommend that you avoid wearing glasses for 3 weeks following surgery. If glasses are necessary, you may wear them lightly resting on your nasal cast or taped to your forehead. It is imperative to wear the lightest pair of glasses available. You may insert your contact lenses 2 days after surgery. The nasal cast will be removed 1 week following surgery. We still recommend avoiding glasses for 3-4 weeks following surgery. There are tricks that can be employed if glasses are necessary. Please consult our staff to discuss these options.
- Please do not drive or operate machinery for 24 hours after your surgery. Until that time, you will still be affected by the drugs you were given during your surgery, and it is not safe for you to drive. After a day, if you are not requiring pain medication, you may drive limited amounts.

What to expect

- Your nose will drain some mucus and a bit of blood for 1-2 days after your surgery, which is normal. We will send you home with a drip pad of gauze under your nose to absorb this drainage. Please change the gauze as needed. Don’t blow your nose for a week, but you may sniff backwards.
- Swelling of your nose and the surrounding areas of your cheek will invariably occur after nasal surgery and will gradually resolve over varying time periods. Any minor swelling should be gone by 2 weeks. However, there can be minor swelling and a feeling of stiffness in the tip of your nose that persists well beyond the 2-week period. In

many cases, the tip may not be as delicate appearing as we want it to be for up to 6 months after surgery. Sometimes we may inject a small amount of steroid into the bridge of the nose to help resolve this swelling.

- Bruising around your nose, cheeks and lower eyelids is very common after rhinoplasty surgery. It should be completely resolved by 2 weeks after surgery. If this bruising presents a problem in your return to work, cover-up makeup usually masks it well.
- Numbness over your nose is also quite normal following surgery. You will gradually regain sensation over the top of your nose. You can expect the tip to be slightly numb and “stiff” feeling for up to 3 months after surgery.
- Breathing through your nose will gradually improve after surgery. It is vital for return of nasal health that you spray the inside of your nose frequently with saline spray. Antibiotic ointment applied with a cotton-tipped applicator can help soften any crusting and help in its removal.

Medications

- You will be given pain medication to take only if you need them. Do not take them more often than instructed, and do not take them if you do not feel pain. These pills contain a mild narcotic that may make you lightheaded or even nauseated. We would prefer that you take 3-4 over the counter 200mg ibuprofen tablets every 6-8 hours if this controls your discomfort. You may also alternate ibuprofen and prescribed pain medication every 3-4 hours if you need more pain control.
- You may be given antibiotic pills to take. If you are given them, please take them as instructed, as they are important for proper healing. Take them until they are completely gone.
- You may be given prednisone (steroids) to take for a week. This is to help reduce swelling and discomfort. Please take them exactly as the instructions are written.
- You may be given a nausea medication (Zofran) to take after surgery. Please take if needed exactly as prescribed.
- Please resume taking all your normal medications the day after surgery.

Wound Care

- We will ask you to use saline spray in your nose the day after surgery for the drying effect on your nasal lining.
 - You can purchase saline spray in our office or over the counter at your drug store. Any brand is acceptable; Ayr and Ocean are common brands.
 - You should use 2 squirts into each nostril at least 4 times a day, and you may use it as often as you like.
 - This should be used for at least the next 3 months.
 - Do not use any other sprays in your nose unless you have been given specific instructions to do so by our office. Please do contact us if you have any questions in this regard.
- If you have any visible incisions (the tissue between your nostrils or if you have had some cartilage borrowed from your ear to put in your nose), we have used dissolving sutures to close the incision. Apply ointment 3 times a day with a Q-Tip and rub it in well, as the sutures dissolve only if kept moist with ointment. Continue to apply the ointment until the sutures have wiped away, at about a week.
 - If cartilage was borrowed, you may also have a dressing on the front of your ear, and one on the back. These dressings are sewn to your ear, and we will remove them on the day after surgery. Don't try to remove or change these ear dressings.



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Post Operative Instructions

- You may wash your face, wash around all the incisions, and shampoo your hair the day following surgery. It will not cause damage if your nasal cast dressing gets a bit wet, but do not run water directly onto the cast. Use ointment on the wounds before washing so that it might “waterproof” the incision line.
- You may be instructed in a set of Nasal Massage Exercises. These exercises are intended to keep your nose narrowed and straight as the nasal bones heal back to the facial bones. If you are instructed in using these exercises, please be diligent in using them for the first month after your surgery. In most cases they are not needed beyond that time.
- You must protect your new nose from the sun for 3 months after surgery. Sun exposure will cause swelling in the nose and will affect the healing process. The skin of your nose will be very likely to burn from sun exposure. Good protection means both a brimmed hat and sunblock, preferably with Zinc Oxide, of at least SPF 15.

Visits to Our Office

- You will be seen in our office 1-7 days after surgery (follow up appointment dates were detailed in the packet that was mailed out to you prior to surgery). Your nasal cast will be removed, your nose will be gently cleaned out, and you will be started on a nasal saline spray. If you have a dressing on your ear, it will also be removed.
- Your next visit will be at 1 month after surgery.
- Normally, we will then see you at 3, 6 and 12-month intervals after surgery. There is no charge for these visits. You may have postoperative pictures taken at these visits.

If you have any questions or concerns following your surgery do not hesitate to contact our office at **804-484-3739**.

Office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. If you need to reach us after these office hours, please call Virginia ENT's main line at **(804) 484-3700**.



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