

What to Expect After Septoplasty/Rhinoplasty

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Almost all nasal surgeries are done outpatient meaning you will go home within a few hours after surgery. There may be some occasional dripping of blood from the nose over the first 24hrs. A piece of gauze taped to the upper lip may be used to prevent this from dripping down. Most of the recovery the first day will be related to anesthesia.

Pain Medication:

You will be sent home with a narcotic pain medicine (Vicodin™/Norco™). Try to take this with food, as this lessens nausea that can come with it. Taken regularly for several days this can also cause constipation. If this occurs, take over the counter stool softeners (Docusate/Colace™). If your pain is mild you can take Acetaminophen (Tylenol) in place of the narcotic pain medicine. Starting the day after surgery you can also take NSAIDS (ibuprofen, naproxen) as long as there is no bleeding.

Wound Care:

For most nasal surgeries, Dr. VandeGriend now uses the Kotler nasal airway (visit <http://kotlernasalairway.com/> for more details). This maintains comfortable nasal breathing while packing is in place and is usually removed 2 days after surgery. After this is taken out you can use over the counter saline (salt water) spray to gently moisten the area. Avoid blowing your nose hard for 2 weeks after surgery (very gentle blowing is OK). If you have to sneeze, keep your mouth open. There are always some stitches inside the nose which dissolve on their own in about 2-3 weeks. Frequently crusting occurs over these stitches. Do not forcibly pull the crusting out as they are usually attached to those stitches, causing pain and disrupting healing. Instead use a cotton swab (Q-tip™) soaked in hydrogen peroxide to gently roll over the crusts, which will loosen them up. If there are blue or black stitches on the skin underneath the nose apply antibiotic ointment (Bacitracin or Neosporin) 1-2 times per day. If crusting occurs on the skin stitches this can be removed in the same way with cotton swabs and peroxide. If any skin stitches are used, they are removed in 1 week.

Depending on the nature of the surgery, if the nasal bones need to be adjusted there will be bruising under the eyes for up to 10 days along with some swelling. To limit swelling cold packs (frozen peas/vegetables work well) can be rested on the lower forehead above the nose. Sleeping with the head slightly elevated for the first couple days also helps. A small short course of steroids may also be given to help reduce the swelling on request. A plastic nasal cast is placed over the nose on top of tape. This should be kept dry and will usually be removed 1 week after surgery.

Time Off:

Although everyone's recovery is different, most people will want to rest for the first week after surgery. Two weeks after surgery most people are feeling back to normal and can resume full activities. It is recommended to avoid strenuous activity for 2 weeks.