

# Septoplasty

The septum is the wall between the two sides of the nose. It is made up of cartilage in the front and bone in the back. The septum is often deviated (moved away) causing nasal blockage, facial pressure and sinus problems. A deviated septum can also make it more difficult to perform sinus surgery.

The septum is corrected by making an incision on one side of the nose and lifting off the lining. The part of the cartilage and bone that cause the blockage are removed. The lining can then be put back in place. The septum can not be completely removed because it provides support to the nose.

A septoplasty procedure takes about 30 to 45 minutes. The surgery can be done with general anesthesia (completely asleep). It can also be done with local anesthesia plus sedation (twilight sleep). Frequently, this surgery is combined with another surgical procedure called turbinate reduction to achieve the best opening of the nasal airway.

Most patients who have this surgery will not need nasal packing. The packing is the most uncomfortable part of this procedure. If packing is used, it is usually removed in 2 to 3 days.

You will need to see the doctor at least 4 times after surgery.

1<sup>st</sup> visit date: \_\_\_\_\_ (1 to 3 days after surgery)

2<sup>nd</sup> visit date: \_\_\_\_\_ (7 to 10 days later)

3<sup>rd</sup> visit date: \_\_\_\_\_ (2 to 3 weeks apart)

4<sup>th</sup> visit date: \_\_\_\_\_ (2 to 3 weeks apart)

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**Learn more about your health care.**

## **Before Surgery**

- Do not take anything that will thin your blood for 2 weeks before surgery. This includes:
  - ▶ Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil), naproxen sodium (Aleve) or anything this containing aspirin. If you need a pain reliever, take Tylenol (Acetaminophen).
  - ▶ High doses of vitamin E (over 400 IU per day).
  - ▶ Herbal products such as Ginseng, Ginkgo biloba and garlic.
- You will need 1 bottle of Afrin 12 hour nasal spray.
- You will need plenty of nasal saline spray such as Ayr, Ocean Mist or a generic brand.
- After surgery you will feel like you have a bad cold for 7 to 10 days. Follow your doctor's instructions to help decrease the time you feel bad.
- You will be off work for at least 10 to 14 days depending on the physical activity your job requires.
- There is a chance of complications with any surgery. Discuss the possible complications of this surgery with your doctor.

## **Your Care at Home:**

### **General Instructions**

- **Do not blow your nose until you see the doctor.** Your doctor will tell you when it is OK. It will depend on your surgery and healing. It is usually between 3 days and 3 weeks. You may sniff through your nose to help clear the drainage.
- Keep you head elevated 30 to 45 degrees for 2 to 3 days.
- Sneeze with an open mouth. Do not try to stop the sneeze.
- You may be able to breath through your nose right after surgery. But 12 to 24 hours after surgery expect your nose to be blocked. You may not be able to breathe through your nose for 7 to14 days. It will slowly improve over 6 to 8 weeks.

- Expect drainage from the back and front of your nose. You may use the drip pads that are provided. However, nasal breathing will help dry up the drainage so only use the drip pads if necessary.
- Expect the drainage to be blood tinged mucous for 4 to 5 days. Drainage, even light bleeding during healing is common. The drainage should decrease each week.
- You may eat what you want.

### **Caring for Your Nose**

Follow the instructions carefully. This is the most important thing you can do to help healing.

#### ***For the first 3 days:***

1. Use 2 puffs of Afrin 12 hour nasal spray 2 or 3 times a day in each nostril. This will decrease the drainage and help the nose open. This will also decrease bleeding.
2. Use 2 to 3 puffs of saline nasal spray (such as Ayr, Ocean Mist or a generic brand) in each nostril at least 5 times a day. You can not use this solution too much.

#### ***After 3 days:***

1. Afrin spray can be used if you have any bleeding. If this doesn't help the bleeding, **call the doctor.**
2. Use the saline spray at least 5 times a day for the next 2 to 3 weeks. You will be able to decrease the amount used each week if your healing is on schedule.
3. After you heal, the use of the saline spray is recommended when the nose feels dry or if you have lots of mucous.

### **Activity**

It is common to feel tired for 7 to 10 days after surgery. The amount of activity you are allowed will depend on your healing.

- No lifting over 5 to 10 pounds for the first 3 to 5 days.

- Minimal activity such as walking, climbing stairs and bending for the first 2 days.
- No strenuous exercise for 2 weeks. Gradually increase your activity each week.
- Remember that you will not be completely healed for 6 to 8 weeks.

## **Medicines**

- Pain medicine is usually needed for the first few days. The pill is a narcotic and can make you sleepy and constipated. Do not drive if you are taking pain medicine. You may take Tylenol (Acetaminophen) as needed for pain.
- Antibiotics are used to prevent infection and improve healing.
- Do not take high doses of vitamin E (over 400 IU) or herbal products containing Ginseng, Garlic or Ginkgo biloba. They can thin your blood and increase the risk of bleeding.

❖ **Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: [health-info@osu.edu](mailto:health-info@osu.edu).**