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Care after Rhinoplasty/Septoplasty

This page contains answers to frequently asked questions regarding your care after rhinoplasty. This information will help you to remember the instructions given to you after surgery.

What will I see when I look in the mirror?

You may notice considerable swelling and bruising beneath the eyes, upper eyelids, forehead and cheeks, this bruising may last approximately 2 weeks. If you have external or internal splints leave these in place until you are seen at your first follow up appointment. If the external splint falls off before your appointment, gently reapply and secure with adhesive tape and notify our office.

Expect bloody drainage from the nostrils for the next 2-3 days. Change the gauze below the nose as needed. You may gently cleanse the outer edge of the nostril of scabs and blood with a q-tip moistened with hydrogen peroxide. Do not blow or pick at the crust in your nose.

When can I shower or bath?

You may wash your hair and body *but* keep the nasal splint and dressings **dry**.

What can I do after surgery?

On the day of surgery and for 2 days after, please avoid exertion, straining, bending or lifting. I encourage walking short distances the first few post-operative days. Avoid heavy exercise until we discuss it at your first follow up appointment.

Elevating your head by sleeping in a recliner or resting your head on several pillows in bed will help minimize swelling and discomfort.

A room humidifier/vaporizer will help to keep nasal secretions moist and more liquefied to aid in draining of nasal passages.

When can I drive?

You generally should be able to drive about 7-10 days after surgery if you feel up to it. You should not drive if you are still taking narcotic pain medication.

How much pain will I have?

The most discomfort you will have lasts 3-5 days, sometimes longer. As you feel more comfortable, your need for pain medication will be less.

What medications should I use?

I will prescribe a narcotic pain medication for you. Follow directions on the bottle for their use. Do not take any additional Tylenol. In two days you may take 600-800mg of Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil), every 6-8 hours as needed for pain, this will help with the swelling.

Can I drink alcohol?

Do not drink alcohol for 1 week after your surgery or while taking narcotic pain medication.

When will I be seen in the office after surgery?

You will normally be seen in the office within 1-2 weeks of your surgery, and then about 2 other times the first months. You will then be seen periodically to monitor healing. We follow the Rhinoplasty patients up to one year after surgery.

How will I know if I am having a problem?

Urgent problems after rhinoplasty surgery do not occur frequently. These are the complications that will require a change in your post-operative care:

Sudden increase in pain

Loss of consciousness

Bleeding that is profuse and uncontrolled

High fever lasting more than four hours, not relieved with medication

Breathing problems after rhinoplasty are rare but can be a serious complication. If you develop any chest pain or feeling of shortness of breath you must contact my office or be seen in the nearest emergency facility without delay.

Leg swelling with or without associated pain may indicate a problem with the vein circulation in your leg(s). If you have a large amount of leg swelling (either in one or both legs) or if you experience pain in your legs, contact the office immediately.

Medication reactions may occur with the drugs prescribed to you. If you develop a skin rash, itching, vomiting, or diarrhea, stop taking your medication and call the office.

If you have any of the above problems or other questions or concerns, contact our office at (216) 778 - 4450.