

Rhinoplasty Surgery Post-Operative Instructions

Prepare for Your Surgery

Purchase the following items from a store or pharmacy:

- Vaseline
- Gauze 4x4
- Bandage tape
- Cotton swabs (Q-tips)
- Hydrogen peroxide (3% solution)
- Nasal Saline Spray
- Oxymetazoline (Afrin®) Nasal Spray
- Ice Packs/Gel Packs or Frozen Peas/Corn

Instructions for Before Surgery:

- Stop smoking cigarettes or using nicotine products at least 6 weeks before surgery.
- Don't drink any alcohol 24 hours before surgery.
- Stop Afrin® Nasal (generic name Oxymetazoline HCL 0.05%) sprays 4 weeks before surgery. Stop all other nasal sprays 2 weeks prior to the surgery. Please check with your doctor when to resume nasal sprays
- Please stop all **over the counter supplements** for 10 days before surgery, especially fish oil, vitamin E, multivitamins, garlic, ginseng, ginkgo)
- Please stop **over the counter medications** that are non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs for 10 days before surgery, these include ibuprofen (Motrin and Advil), aspirin, naproxen (Aleve). If you are on other **blood thinners** such as warfarin (Coumadin), apixaban (Eliquis), clopidogrel (Plavix), rivaroxaban (Xarelto), among others, please follow instructions from your doctor regarding how to take these medications before and after surgery
- **Do not eat or drink anything** after midnight the night before surgery and do not eat or drink anything the morning of your surgery
- On the **day of surgery**:
 - Someone needs to accompany you and drive you home even if you hire a driver/uber/taxi.

- Wear loose-fitting, comfortable clothing (e.g. shirt with front buttons). Avoid wearing any clothing or undergarments with metal in it (e.g. underwire bra)
- Please do not wear contact lenses, make-up, perfume, lotion, hairspray, jewelry

Instructions for After Surgery

General care instructions

- Have someone drive you home after surgery and help you at home for 1-2 days.
- Keep your head up higher than the rest of your body for the first 2 nights of sleep after surgery. Sleep with your head on 2-3 pillows or in a recliner chair.
- Get lots of rest.
- Do not drink alcohol when taking pain medications. Even if you're not taking pain medications, don't drink alcohol for 3 weeks after surgery, as it can cause a buildup of fluid and swelling in your body (**fluid retention**).
- If you were taking vitamins or supplements before surgery, you may start taking them again one week following the surgery as long as they don't cause uncomfortable symptoms (like nausea).
- Do not smoke or use nicotine products for at least 3 months following the procedure, as this may increase the risk of complications.
- Most patients return to work the week following surgery.

Activity Level Following Surgery

- **Start walking** as soon as possible after your surgery. This helps to reduce swelling, lowers the chance of blood clots or pneumonia, and may help prevent **constipation**
- **Do not drive** for at least 24 hours after surgery and until you are no longer taking any prescribed pain medications (like narcotics or opioids)
- Avoid **airplane travel** for one week following the surgery or until cleared by your doctor
- Most patients **return to work** 1-2 weeks following the surgery
- The following should be **avoided for 1 week** following surgery:
 - Lifting heavy items (over 10 lbs)
 - Bending at the waist
- The following should be **avoided for 2 weeks** following surgery:
 - Physical exercise that can cause overheating
- The following should be **avoided for 4 weeks** following surgery:
 - Swimming
- The following should be **avoided for 8 weeks** following surgery:
 - Diving
 - Contact sports or activities
 - Rubbing your nose

- Activities with the possibility of lots of direct sun exposure (e.g. going to the beach, hiking, skiing, etc.)

Bathing

- You may **shower** 24 hours after surgery. You should wash your face in the sink and avoid the cast getting wet

Care of Your Nose After Surgery

- To **decrease swelling**, for the first 48 hours after surgery, you may place cold gel packs (or frozen peas or corn work well) on your cheeks to help decrease swelling and bruising. Avoid placing these directly on your nose
- **Minor bleeding** from the nose may occur during the first 24-48 hours after surgery. You may tape some gauze to your upper lip to help catch any blood that drips from your nose. If you find that you are having enough bleeding to soak through the gauze more often than once every 10-15 minutes, please do the following:
 - Spray oxymetazoline nasal 0.05% (Afrin) into each side of your nose and try to relax (elevated blood pressures caused by pain, walking, or other reasons can worsen nose bleeding)
 - If after 10 minutes the bleeding continues to soak through the gauze more often than 10-15 minutes, or if you begin to swallow blood or have other concerns, please contact us
 - For very severe bleeding, call 911 or go to your local emergency department
- We would like you to **care for your incisions** at least 3 times per day in the following order:
 - **Clean incisions** with hydrogen peroxide and half water three times a day for 3 days after surgery. We recommend you dip 1-2 Q-tips into the peroxide and then gently use them to clean the incision and remove any scabs/crusts on the skin between the nostrils and just within the edge of the nostril. Do not stick the Q-tips into your nose
 - Apply **petrolatum ointment** (Vaseline) to incisions/stitches with a Q-tip. The stitches should always have a thin layer of ointment and appear glistening
- Use two sprays of nasal saline spray into each nostril every 4 hours while awake for the first 2 weeks after surgery. You do not need to wake up at night to use this
- Avoid **nose blowing** and try to **sneeze through your mouth** for 2 weeks after surgery
- Avoid **makeup** on incisions until approved by your doctor
- Avoid exposing your nose to **direct sunlight**. Direct sunlight in the early healing process may make scars more noticeable and the nose will sunburn more easily, so we recommend sunscreen during the first year after surgery when sun exposure is not avoidable

Common Symptoms After Surgery

- Your face may feel puffy after surgery. You may also experience some bruising, especially under the eyes or on the cheeks. These feelings tend to peak 2-3 days after surgery and then slowly begin to improve. Most bruising and cheek swelling disappears within 1-2 weeks after the surgery
- Swelling on the nose will worsen for the first 2-3 days after surgery. This will lessen slowly over time, but it may take a year or more to fully resolve. Within the first several weeks the swelling on the nose begins to look much better, and will improve for months after the surgery
- Your nose may feel numb after surgery, and in most cases this resolves within the first year after surgery. Occasionally a patient may feel numbness in their front teeth or the tops of the mouth, but this typically resolves over the course of 1-3 weeks. Your nose may also feel stiffer after surgery, and this typically also improves over time

When to Contact Your Doctor

Call your doctor if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Increasing swelling or bruising
- Swelling and redness that lasts for a few days
- Increased redness along the places where the skin was cut
- Severe or increased pain that is not helped by medication
- Side effects to medications including rash, nausea, headache, vomiting, or diarrhea
- An oral (mouth) temperature over 101°F
- Bleeding that saturates through gauze more often than once every 10-15 minutes. Please see “Care of your Nose” section above for recommendations on managing bleeding
 - In the event of very severe or life-threatening bleeding, you should call 911 or go to the Emergency Department.
- Loss of feeling or motion

How to Contact Your Doctor

For any emergency, please call 911. For other questions or concerns, please call our office at **947-217-3223**. If your question or concern is of an urgent nature and outside our normal office hours, please call our normal office phone number and follow the phone prompts to reach the on-call doctor.