

F. Parker Thornton, M.D., L.L.C.

**Georgetown Medical Building
8901 W. 74th St., Suite 121, Shawnee Mission, Ks. 66204
913-261-2223, Fax 913-261-2224**

Adult and Pediatric E.N.T., Audiology and Hearing Aids

Septoplasty with or without partial turbinate resection: Postoperative instructions

Day of the surgery:

You have undergone a procedure today called septoplasty. Your nasal septum which separates your nasal cavity into two halves was straightened out. Both cartilage and bone may have been removed or repositioned. Frequently in conjunction with this the inferior turbinates may have been partially removed.

If only your septum was worked on you will not have any nasal packing however if your turbinates were partially trimmed you will have packing which completely obstructs your nasal breathing. You will be instructed prior to surgery whether or not there will be packing. Roughly half of the people undergoing a septoplasty will also have a small plastic splint placed inside their nose. One piece will be on each side of your septum and sutured together. This will stay in for one week and be removed in the office. If you have packing in place you will be instructed to follow-up the day after surgery in the office for removal. You will have a small gauze under your nose which is there to serve as a drip pad. A moderate amount of bloody mucus drainage is normal the day of surgery. You may need to change this gauze pad several times the day of surgery. This is not unusual. If there is constant bright red bleeding then you would need to contact the office. While these packs are in place you will be strictly breathing through your mouth. This does make eating, drinking and sleeping somewhat difficult. It also will increase pressure in your ears. You will want to sleep with your head elevated at least 30°. Those symptoms will be essentially resolved the day after surgery when the packs are removed.

If you did not have packing placed do not blow your nose the day of surgery. This significantly increases the risk for postoperative nosebleeds. Sniffing is OK. Sailing nasal spray used several times per day will also help keep the nasal cavity clear. If you are having moderate bleeding the day of surgery Afrin (oxymetazoline) nasal spray can be used to stop the bleeding. Use two or three squirts in each nostril no more than a couple of times per day.

You will be given prescriptions for both a pain medication and an antibiotic. The pain medication generally is Lortab which is a combination of Tylenol (acetaminophen) and hydrocodone. The antibiotic usually will be Omnicef (cefdinir). These medications may be adjusted based on the patient's history of medical allergies. Take as directed. Do not use ibuprofen, Advil, Motrin, aspirin, or other over-the-counter pain medications secondary to the increased risk of bleeding. You may substitute plain Tylenol for the Lortab but do not use it in addition to the Lortab as this can lead to toxic levels of Tylenol.

Your activity level of the day of surgery should be minimal. Essentially sitting around with your head elevated and minimizing movement will help minimize your risk of bleeding. Your diet of the day of surgery is as tolerated. You should start out on liquids and gradually increase to normal diet. Nausea and vomiting are not unusual especially in the first 24 hours. This could be a reaction to the anesthetic, possibly your medication or blood in the stomach from surgery. Contact the office if this is significant.

Low-grade fever is also fairly normal after surgery. Anything over 102 should be reported.

Aftercare:

If you had nasal packing placed during surgery you will be instructed to follow-up the next day for packing removal. This is a procedure that is very brief. It only takes a few seconds to remove the packs on each side of the nose. It usually is recommended to have someone bring you to the office. Most people tolerate this very well but if you are concerned about the pain you may want to take pain medication roughly a half hour before your visit. Some people do get a little lightheaded after packing removal but this usually is very brief.

If you did not have nasal packing placed you will be instructed to follow-up in approximately one week. If you had splints placed they will be removed at the one week visit.

After packing and/or splint removal you will be instructed to use saline spray several times per day. Frequently patients will also use a neti pot or saline irrigation. This will be discussed at your postoperative visits. There generally is a moderate amount of raw membrane in your nose after surgery which will cause nasal crusting and scabs. The better job patients do using saline spray to keep their nasal cavity moist the easier the healing period will be.

It will generally take six to eight weeks for most people to complete the majority of their healing. Most people will usually be seen roughly three or four times in the office after surgery.

Feel free to call the office during general business hours for routine questions, someone is also always available 24/7 for emergencies.