



Turbinate Reduction

There are three turbinates (inferior, middle, and superior) on each side of the nose and its job is to clean and humidify the air as it moves through your nose into your lungs. Learn more about turbinate hypertrophy.

Goals of Surgery

Turbinate surgery correct the problem of nasal obstruction by reducing the turbinate size and thereby decreasing airway resistance while preserving the natural function of the turbinates. This should improve nasal breathing and may reduce nasal drainage and post- nasal drip.

Surgical Treatment

Your surgery may be performed in conjunction with a surgical septoplasty.

Inferior turbinate reduction is usually performed under local or general anesthesia. The surgeon use endoscopes, a thin tube with a light at the end, to improve visualization and provide a magnified view during surgery.

Your surgeon makes an incision in the lining mucosa of the turbinate and carefully removes the underlying bone of the turbinate. Your doctor may elect to use a Microdebrider to thin the tissue around the turbinate. Alternately, they may be cauterized with radio frequency or electrical current (cautery or radiofrequency surgery).

Complications associated with inferior turbinate surgery include bleeding, crusting, dryness, and scarring. Your doctor may prescribe a saline spray solution to relieve dryness and aid in healing.

Turbinate reduction does not involve cutting through the skin, as it is performed entirely through the nostrils. Therefore, most people can go home the same day. Learn more about pre and post-operative care.

Post-Operative Instructions

Please read these instructions carefully as they provide answers to questions you will have about what to expect after surgery. The success of your surgery depends on your completion of the postoperative instructions described below.

What to expect after Endoscopic Sinus Surgery

Bleeding: It is normal to have some bleeding after sinus surgery. You can expect some bloody discharge for the first 3 to 5 days after surgery, especially after you irrigate your sinuses. If steady bleeding occurs after surgery tilt your head back slightly and breathe through your nose gently. You may dab your nose with tissue but avoid any nose blowing. If this does not stop the bleeding you may use Afrin nasal spray. Several sprays will usually stop any bleeding. If Afrin fails to stop steady nasal bleeding that you should call our office.

Fatigue: You can expect to feel very tired for the first week after surgery. This is normal, and most patients plan on taking at least one week off of work to recover. Every patient is different and some return to work sooner.

Nasal congestion and discharge: You will have nasal congestion and discharge for the first few weeks after surgery. Your nasal passage and breathing should return to normal 2-3 weeks after surgery.

Postoperative Visits: You will have a certain number of postoperative visits depending on what surgery you have. During these visits we will clean your nose and sinuses of fluid and blood left behind after surgery. These visits are very important to aid the healing process so it is essential that you attend all those scheduled for you. There is some discomfort involved with the cleaning so it is best to take a pain medication (described above) 45 minutes before your visit.

What to Avoid after Endoscopic Sinus Surgery

Nose Blowing and Straining: You should avoid straining, heavy lifting (less than 20lbs) and blowing for at least 10 days after surgery. Straining or nose blowing soon after surgery may cause bleeding. You can resume 50% of your regular exercise regimen at 1 week after surgery and your normal routine 2 weeks after surgery.

Aspirin or Non-Steroidal Anti-inflammatory (NSAIDs) medications: Aspirin and NSAIDs such as Motrin, Advil, and Aleve should be stopped 2 weeks prior to surgery. Aspirin and NSAIDs may cause bleeding and should be avoided for 2 weeks after surgery.

Steroid Nasal Sprays: If you were taking nasal steroid sprays prior to surgery, you should avoid using these for at least 2 weeks after sinus surgery to allow the lining of the nose and sinuses to heal. Your doctor will tell you when it is safe to restart this medicine.

Postoperative Care Instructions

Nasal Saline Spray: Nasal saline mist spray can be used every 2-3 hours after surgery and can make your nose more comfortable after surgery. These sprays (Ayr, Ocean, Simple Saline) are over the counter medications and can be purchased in any pharmacy.

Sinus Irrigations: you will start the sinus irrigation with the sinus rinse kits (NeilMed Sinus Rinse Kit) the day after surgery. This must be performed at least twice daily, Your doctor or nurse will show you how to perform the irrigations. At first it will feel strange if you haven't done them before. Soon, however, they will become quite soothing as they clean out the debris left behind in your sinuses after surgery. You can expect some bloody discharge with the irrigations for the first few days after surgery. *These irrigations are critical for success after sinus surgery.*

When to Call After Surgery

- Fever after the day of surgery higher than 101 F
- Constant clear watery discharge after the first week of surgery
- Sudden visual changes or eye swelling
- Severe headache or neck stiffness
- Severe diarrhea
- Steady, brisk nose bleeding that doesn't get better after using Afrin