

What to Expect After Sinus Surgery

RM Rosenfeld

After Surgery

When you greet your child in the recovery room, their mood will be unpredictable. Some children sleep peacefully (lucky you!), but others are very unhappy. Crying or agitation relate more to a sense of disorientation, than to active pain or discomfort. Fortunately, most children do not recall the hour or so they spend in the recovery room. When your child is ready, the anesthesiologist will transfer them to the ambulatory holding area where they can have something to eat and drink. Most children will then be discharged from the hospital within 1-2 hours.

Nasal Care

A gauze pad will be taped under the nose after surgery to absorb any discharge or oozing. The pad should be changed as often as necessary, and is generally not needed after 1-2 days (use a two-inch gauze pad and surgical tape from your local drugstore). Most children have some absorbable material placed deep within the nasal cavity to promote healing. This material does not interfere with breathing and will gradually absorb; it does not need to be removed. For the first 3 weeks after surgery, a nasal saline spray (Ayr, Nasal, Salinex, Ocean, etc.) can be used, as needed, to moisten the nostrils and promote healing (spray each nostril 2-3 times daily). Gentle nose-blowing is allowed, but forceful nose-blowing should be discouraged. If your child sneezes frequently, encourage them to relieve the pressure through the mouth instead of the nose.

Activity & Pain

There are no strict rules for activity after surgery, other than to avoid contact sports, heavy exertion, or hanging upside down for 1-2 weeks. During this period swimming is allowed, but a nose plug should be used when diving or jumping into the pool. Pain is generally mild after sinus surgery, and resolves within 2-3 days. Over the counter pain medication (e.g., acetaminophen, ibuprofen) should be used, as needed, to reduce pain.

Some Things *Not* to Worry About

A small amount of *bloody discharge* from the nose is common, and should gradually resolve within several days after surgery. *Nasal congestion* may occur for several weeks from a temporary swelling of the nasal membranes. *A hoarse or abnormal voice* may occur from the anesthesia tube, but should subside within two days. *Vomiting* may occur for up to 24 hours after anesthesia. *Fever* up to 101 degrees and *bad breath* may persist for up to several days after surgery.

When to Call Us

Call our office if 1) there is persistent or excessive bleeding, 2) fever is 102 degrees or higher *despite* acetaminophen (Tylenol), 3) your child is completely unable to breathe through the nose (there may be some crusts that need to be cleaned out), 4) headache persists or worsens despite acetaminophen (Tylenol), 5) your child has abnormal vision or swelling of the eye, 6) a large amount of clear or watery nasal discharge occurs and fails to subside within a few days, or 7) your child seems to be getting worse—not better—as the days go by. Your doctor will arrange a post-operative office visit approximately 3-4 weeks after surgery.

I have received a copy of this information sheet.

Parent or Guardian _____ Relation to child _____

Child's name _____ Date _____