Postoperative Instructions following Nasal Surgery

The following is a list of general instructions for your care following surgery. Please read them carefully.

Following these instructions should help you get the best results from your surgery. Have someone drive you home after surgery and help you at home for 1-2 days at a minimum.

Following your nasal procedure the nurses will ask you to meet the discharge criteria: to drink liquids, walk with a steady gait, void, manage your discomfort, and have your nasal drainage under control.

Nasal congestion, facial fullness, headache and disrupted sleep are very normal postoperative symptoms following nasal surgery and will decrease as the healing process occurs. It is not uncommon to have numbness involving the nose, the roof of the mouth (palate) or the front teeth. This is normal and will subside over the coming weeks to months. Unusual sensations, pins and needles, and occasionally mild discomfort may occur as these nerves regenerate over time.

Bleeding
The nurses will teach you how to change the drip pad under your nose. Change this as needed for the first 24-48 hours following surgery. It is not uncommon to change this every 15 minutes for the first several hours following nasal surgery. If you completely saturate the pad with bright red blood every five minutes for one hour by the clock, please call your surgeon at the numbers provided below.

Swelling and Bruising
Cool compresses should be applied across the eyes for the first 48 hours after surgery. This involves multiple washcloths and a basin of ice water. These washcloths should be changed out of the basins every twenty to thirty minutes to keep them cool. The washcloths should be applied diagonally over each eye and crisscrossed over the forehead. If you have a plastic splint on your nose keep it dry.

Swelling and bruising will vary from patient-to-patient. Swelling and bruising will actually increase the first few days before subsiding. When your splint is removed at the one-week point, your nose may appear fat and turned up too much- this is to be expected. Most of your swelling and bruising should resolve over the first two to three weeks. Do expect, however, to have minor fluctuations in the remaining swelling over the course of the next two to three months. Please avoid use of any make up until cleared by Dr. Shockley or Dr. Jarchow. With permission, usually this can be applied ten days to two weeks after surgery.

You can minimize swelling by using the cool compresses and:

1) Elevating the head at least 45 degrees and sleeping on multiple pillows over the first few days.
2) Avoiding bending over or heavy lifting for the first three weeks.
**Pain**
Most patients complain of pressure from swelling and congestion more than pain. Use the pain medication prescribed as directed/as needed. Vicodin, Lortab and Percocet contain Tylenol (acetaminophen). Do not take additional Tylenol or acetaminophen while taking Vicodin, Lortab or Percocet. Do not drive or drink alcohol while taking pain medication. Side effects of pain medications can include nausea and constipation. Taking pain medication with food can minimize nausea. Over-the-counter laxatives are indicated if constipation occurs.

**Antibiotics**
Start your prescribed antibiotic when you arrive home following the rhinoplasty procedure. During your rhinoplasty surgery you received antibiotics through your IV. Take antibiotics as directed until gone. It is not uncommon to have a low-grade fever for 24 hours following surgery.

**Daily Care**
Clean the suture lines, inside your nostrils and inside the splints two times daily with half strength hydrogen peroxide on a Q-tip. Then with another Q-tip, apply a liberal amount of antibiotic ointment.

There will be soft silastic splints along each side of your septum (the wall between the two sides of the nose). Splints reinforce the newly shaped cartilage. You may notice that tears run down your cheeks. This is due to swelling and will subside during the first week following rhinoplasty surgery. These splints will be removed on your first post operative visit one week after your surgery.

The cast must remain on your nose for one week after rhinoplasty surgery. It must be kept dry or it could become loose. Notify your facial plastic surgeon immediately if the cast falls off.

**Follow-up**
You will be asked to come to our Clinic office (not the Surgery Center) for splint and cast removal in about one week. Although removal of splints and sutures has been described by most patients as discomfort rather than pain, you are encouraged to take your pain medication about an hour prior to splint and suture removal.

**Eye Glasses**
Eyeglasses may be worn with the splint in place. Once the splint is removed, they should be either suspended (taped) from the forehead or supported on the cheek for a period of three to four weeks. This is critical. Pressure on the nose may change its final shape. Contact lenses may be inserted the week after surgery.
Other Restrictions
1. No strenuous exercise or heavy lifting for at least four weeks.
2. No contact sports for at least six weeks.
3. No pull-over clothing for two weeks.
4. Avoid yawning or wide mouth opening for two weeks.
5. Avoid nose blowing or sniffing through the nose for two to three weeks.
6. Use a baby toothbrush on the upper teeth for two weeks following surgery.
7. If sneezing, sneeze with the mouth open for two weeks.
8. No driving for one, preferably two weeks after surgery.
9. Refrain from getting your nasal splint wet. Bathe from the neck down.

Finally
The healing time for nasal surgery is often more than expected and the results are worth the wait. While any noticeable swelling should be completely gone after four to six weeks, your healing will continue for the entire first year. We will follow you through this entire process, but be patient.

Follow-up Visits
The routine for follow-up after your surgery is at one week, one month, 3 months, 6 months and 1 year after surgery.

Appointments
Carolina Crossing Office (919) 490-3280
UNC Office (919) 966-6483

Please do not hesitate to contact our office.

During the day Monday – Friday (8:30 am - 4:30pm) call (919) 966 – 6484 to speak with a nurse.

During evenings and weekends call (919) 966 – 4131 and ask for the ear, nose and throat (ENT) resident on call.

Thank you for following these instructions. This will help you heal properly and will give you your best chance at getting the results we both hope for.

William W. Shockley MD and Andrea M. Jarchow MD