



NHS

NHS Foundation Trust

Patient information service
St Michaels Hospital
ENT department

Nasal and sinus surgery



Nasal surgery

How long can I expect to be in hospital?

Most routine nasal and sinus surgery can be performed as a day case but you may need to be in overnight depending on your surgery.

How long will I have to stay off work?

You should ask this question again on your discharge, but you should be planning on one to two weeks off, depending on what operation you have had and also what your job is.

For example, if you work in a dusty environment or your job involves heavy lifting, then you may need two weeks off.

Please request a sick note for your employer if you require one.

How will the operation be done?

Most sinus and nasal operations can be performed through your nostrils without the need to make any external cuts.

For sinus and nasal polyp operations they are performed using telescopes (nasendoscopes). This allows your surgeon to look closely at structures in the confined space of your nose and sinuses.

What are the risks?

For most sinus and nasal operations you should expect some discomfort and possible bleeding.

As with most operations infections are possible and it would be advisable to avoid people with obvious coughs and colds immediately after your surgery.

Other specific risks for your surgery will be explained at the time of gaining your consent for surgery. If you want any further explanation please feel free to ask again.

Will I be able to breathe through my nose after my operation?

Initially, you will have packs and sometimes, splints in your nose. The nasal packs are usually removed a few hours after the operation. Sometimes, the packs may need to stay in overnight, which will mean you will need to stay in hospital.

After the packs are removed, your nose may still feel blocked and may bleed. Some bleeding is to be expected and will be stopped using first aid measures, such as the application of an ice pack.

Your nose may run more than usual for a few weeks after the operation and the mucus may be tinted with blood. Your sense of smell may also be reduced. This is normal and to be expected.

Occasionally nasal splints are used to support the nasal dividing wall while it is healing. If these are used it will be explained to you. Generally, these are removed five to seven days after the operation in the outpatients department.

Stitches which are used inside the nose are dissolvable and will dissolve by themselves or fallout.

Is there anything I should or should not do when I first go home?

Yes, you should avoid smoking/smoky/crowded areas and avoid drinking alcohol as it may cause bleeding. Avoid strenuous activities and if you sneeze, try to sneeze with your mouth open to help decrease the pressure forced through the nose.

Avoid blowing your nose if possible. If you need to blow your nose, do it very gently at first.

Saline nasal washes are useful and are likely to be recommended. Ready made solutions can be purchased over the counter or you can prepare your own solution.

The ingredients for a homemade solution are

- 500ml boiled water (which has been allowed to cool down)
- half a teaspoon of salt
- half a teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)

Using a clean container, dissolve the salt and baking soda in the water.

Standing over a sink, pour some of the solution into the palm of your hand, block one nostril and sniff up the solution.

Repeat this action on the other side. For maximum benefit, you will need to do nasal washing at least three times a day. It is safest to prepare a fresh solution every day.

You may also be given specific instruction after your operation regarding nasal washes and nasal sprays. Please follow these.

Sinus surgery

What are sinuses?

Located in the face and head, the sinuses are air filled spaces, which assist with the flow of mucus and breathing.

When is sinus surgery necessary?

Sinus surgery is required when conservative measures to relieve sinusitis are no longer effective.

Conservative measures include weeks, often months, of using nasal sprays, drops and sometimes tablets (antibiotics/steroids).

A computerised tomography (CT) scan is usually required prior to the operation to confirm a diagnosis of sinusitis.

What are the risks?

Risks for sinus surgery are the same as for nasal surgery. Additionally, sinus surgery also carries a risk of eye problems and spinal fluid leaks.

Sometimes, some bleeding can happen in the eye socket and this appears as bruising.

This usually resolves on its own without the need for treatment, however you may be advised not to blow your nose.

Rarely, the bleeding can cause swelling of the eye and affect your sight. In this case, an ophthalmologist (specialist eye doctor) would examine you.

There is also a small risk of damage to the thin bone which separates the nose and brain. This causes spinal fluid to leak out of your nose.

If this does occur, you may be admitted to hospital for observation and may require another operation to repair this leak.

Contacting the department

The ENT nurse practitioners can be contacted via switchboard during office hours: [REDACTED]

Please do not hesitate to ask if there anything else you would like to know or that you may be concerned about.

As well as providing clinical care, our Trust has an important role in research. This allows us to discover new and improved ways of treating patients.

While under our care, you may be invited to take part in research.
To find out more please visit: [REDACTED]

Help us prevent the spread of infection in hospital. Please make sure your hands are clean. Wash and dry them thoroughly/use the gel provided. If you have been unwell in the last 48 hours please consider whether your visit is essential.

Smoking is the primary cause of preventable illness and premature death. For support in stopping smoking contact
NHS Smokefree on 0300 123 1044.

Drinkline is the national alcohol helpline. If you're worried about your own or someone else's drinking, you can call this free helpline in complete confidence.
Drinkline on 0300 123 1110.

For access all patient leaflets and information please go to the following address:
<http://foi.avon.nhs.uk/>

Bristol switchboard: [REDACTED]

Weston switchboard: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



For an interpreter or signer please contact the telephone number on your appointment letter.



For this leaflet in large print or PDF format, please email [REDACTED]

