



**PROF DARLENE LUBBE**

# Sinus Surgery

## Pre- and Post-Operative Instructions

Dear Patient,

You will be undergoing a surgical procedure that is both safe and affords excellent results, provided the necessary care is given both pre- and post-operatively. Following our guidelines will positively assist the surgery and help to reduce the likelihood of unnecessary delays or complications in your recovery and healing.

Your surgery may be limited to working inside your nose with a nasal endoscope, or an incision may be necessary to allow access to areas that are not easily reached with the endoscope.

Cleaning your nose after the surgery is important and helps to relieve persistent or recurrent sinus disease. You will need to visit our office to have this done, usually 1 and 6 weeks after surgery. These post-operative visits should be borne in mind when scheduling your surgery date.

As with any surgery, you run a slight risk of infection and bleeding. When incisions are required, your risks also include numbness in your front teeth or above the eyebrow and scarring at the incision site. This usually goes away after 6 weeks.

## **BEFORE SURGERY**

- Stop smoking at least 3 weeks before surgery.
- Stop aspirin 2 weeks before surgery (Disprin, Grandpa, Med-Lemon).
- Tell us at least 1 week before surgery about any medications you are taking so that we can advise you on which ones should be stopped. Failure to let us know could result in postponement of your surgery.
- Arrange for a ride home after you have been discharged from hospital.

## **ON DAY OF ADMISSION**

- Your stomach must be empty for a minimum of 6 hours before surgery.
  - Morning surgery: Last meal at 12 am the night before
  - Afternoon surgery: Light breakfast before 6 am if your surgery is after 1 pm
- Admission to Ward F at Cape Town Mediclinic happens on:
  - Mondays at 6:30 am
  - Thursdays at 11:00 am

## **DURING SURGERY**

Expect the procedure to last from 1 to 4 hours. It will be performed under general anesthesia.

## **AFTER SURGERY**

You can expect some nasal stuffiness and crusting for 3 to 6 weeks after the procedure.

### **The first few days**

- To help control nasal bleeding, an icepack can be applied over the nose and cheeks. Tilt your head forward while sitting up and breathe gently through your nose. Do not snort the blood through your nose as this will promote more bleeding. If bleeding continues, Iliadin may be used sparingly every 6 to 8 hours for 1 to 2 days.
- Use salt water (saline) rinses, beginning 1 to 2 days after surgery, to wash away crusts and surgical debris. Use Sterimar/Salex/Flosinus rinse by squirting the solution into your nose 2 to 3 times times a day for 6 weeks.

- Iliadin nasal decongestant spray will open the nasal passage and may be used just before rinsing with salt water. Use for no longer than 5 days.
- Use regular pain medication as prescribed. Not using your pain medication will result in headaches, facial pain and discomfort, especially in the first week following surgery.
- If you have to blow your nose in the first week after surgery, do so only **very gently**, as hard or excessive blowing can cause bleeding.



### The first few weeks

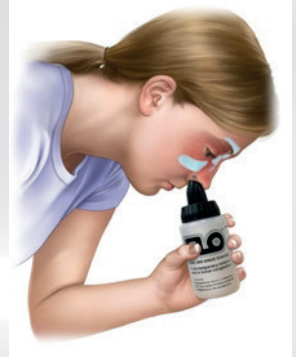
- I recommend you use a nasal steroid spray 15 to 30 minutes after using the salt-water rinse. For patients with nasal polyps, the steroid spray must be continued for a minimum of a year and for some patients, for life. We will advise you accordingly.
- You will need several visits after surgery to clear out old blood and mucus. During these visits, persistent inflammation or scar tissue will be removed after a topical anesthetic is sprayed into the nose.
- For several weeks you will have some thick discolored drainage from your nose. This is normal and does not indicate an infection. This occurs as the sinuses begin to clear themselves; the colour of the mucus will change from bloody to clear to brown as the old blood dissolves.
- Take it easy. For at least 1 week after surgery avoid bending, straining and exercise. No vigorous activity is allowed until healing is complete, usually in about 2 weeks.

### **CALL YOUR DOCTOR or the EMERGENCY ROOM if:**

- you are bleeding excessively
- you have signs of an infection, such as a fever of  $>38^{\circ}\text{C}$ , yellow-green drainage, unrelieved headache despite taking pain killers, or increased pain
- you have decreased or double vision, swelling of the eyes, a stiff neck
- you have clear, watery drainage from your nose.

## DOUCHING INSTRUCTIONS

- Bend forward with your head over a washbasin, or in the shower.
- Squirt the saline solution up one nostril.
- The solution may come out the same nostril, the opposite nostril or through the mouth, depending on the position of your head.



## HOW LONG WILL YOU STAY IN HOSPITAL?

- Most patients undergoing sinus surgery will stay in hospital overnight (1 day) and be discharged the next morning at 9 am.
- If you are having very minor surgery and have no risk factors, you may be discharged that same evening.

## HOW LONG WILL YOU BE OFF WORK?

Many patients are back at work or school the week after surgery (7 days). However, you may want to start working sooner – this is up to you. It's worth noting that recovery is quicker with proper rest and can be delayed if you start to work or exercise too early.

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