



## Endoscopic Sinus Surgery Instructions After Surgery

Sinuses are hollow areas in the forehead, cheeks and between the eyes which are connected to the nose. Procedures may be recommended most commonly for recurrent or ongoing infections, retained material in the sinuses, polyps, or growths in the sinuses. The vast majority of sinus surgeries are performed through the nostrils using a telescope and do not require external incisions. These procedures are often done in the operating room with general anesthesia however some procedures may be done in the office with local anesthesia.



### What is the goal of sinus surgery

- Remove infection and diseased tissue
- Open the natural drainage pathways to decrease the chance of infection going forward
- Allow for better access to the sinuses both for inspection, culture if needed and better topical application of medications

### What is the process for Endoscopic Sinus Surgery?

The vast majority of sinus surgeries are performed through the nostrils using a telescope to take down very thin pieces of bone and open the sinuses. It is rare to require an external incision. Retained mucus, polyps and occasionally masses if present are removed through the nose and the sinuses are often washed out with a saline or medicated rinse.

### What is expected after Sinus Surgery?

1. Pain is often mild to moderate. Tylenol and/or NSAIDs such as ibuprofen may be adequate. If required your doctor may prescribe pain medication.



2. Bloody drainage for 2-5 days is not unusual. Topical decongestant sprays (Afrin) may be used for 2 days if needed and there are no other health reasons that prevent you from using this.
3. Nasal Saline and sinus rinses should be started the day after surgery. These are available over the counter as Neilmed, Neti Pot, and other brands. These should be used 2-3 times daily. If you are still having active bleeding you may use plain saline spray before switching to rinses once bleeding slows.
4. Nasal congestion may be present for the first 1-2 weeks and often improves dramatically after your first sinus cleaning in the office

## **What is the usual follow-up for sinus surgery?**

Follow up and cleaning of the sinuses is crucial for success. Your first appointment should be 1-2 weeks after surgery. A procedure where the sinuses are cleaned and debrided helps keep the sinuses open and diminishes scarring. Most people require this on 1-3 occasions over the first 2 months after surgery. If you do not already have a follow-up appointment scheduled contact your doctor's office 1-2 days after surgery.

## **When should I contact the physician after surgery?**

1. Changes in vision or increased swelling around the eyes
2. Severe headache or neck stiffness
3. Continued nausea and vomiting beyond the first night after surgery
4. Severe bleeding that does not improve after Afrin
5. Fever over 101.5 degrees



## What are the risks of endoscopic sinus surgery?

The risk of sinus surgery is generally low however an operation is being performed in between the eyes and underneath the brain so risks are present. The severe risks that are low probability include damage to the eyes or eye mobility, leakage of the fluid around the brain, meningitis, diminished or lost sense of smell. Lesser risks that may occur include recurrent or persistent infection, recurrent polyps, unfavorable scarring which may diminish the ability of the sinuses to drain, need for further surgery.

## What should I avoid after surgery?

1. Avoid heavy lifting or straining. You can resume 50% of your exercise plan 1 week after surgery and return to normal after 2 weeks.
2. Avoid vigorous nose-blowing and sneezing with your mouth closed for 1 week. This may cause bleeding or excessive pressure on your sinus surgery
3. Avoid travel by plane in the first week without discussing with your doctor.



### Resources:

<https://www.enthealth.org/conditions/sinusitis/>

<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001641.htm>  
(Spanish available)

<https://medlineplus.gov/sinusitis.html>