Introduction

Post-operative care after sinus surgery (FESS) is an extremely important component of the overall healing process. This includes routine post-operative office visits for nasal endoscopy and debridement in addition to nasal irrigations, antibiotics, and other medical therapies as prescribed (see below). The overall goal of this post-operative care is to promote healing and prevent recurrent or persistent sinus disease. It is necessary for you to follow some basic instructions as outlined below to help maximize your results. Please take a moment to read this information and do not hesitate to contact the office with any questions or concerns. Remember, post-operative appointments are an essential part of your sinus care and allow your surgeon the opportunity to review your progress, adjust your medical therapies, and answer your questions. Inability to follow the instructions or maintain your appointments can negatively impact the outcome of the surgery.

What Is Nasal Endoscopy and Debridement?

You will usually be scheduled for post-operative office visits for nasal endoscopy with debridement. The initial visit usually occurs within the first week of your surgery, and the second visit within the following one to two weeks. The need for additional post-operative visits will be determined on an as needed basis thereafter. The initial post-operative visit will be scheduled for you in advance of your surgery by the office staff.

These initial visits are designed to allow your surgeon to inspect and clean your sinus cavities with sinus instruments, similar to those used in the operating room. Early scar tissue (synechiae), crusting, blood clots, and mucous will be removed and your medical therapy will be appropriately adjusted. Complications from these manipulations in the office are exceptionally rare; however, the theoretical risks are the same as the surgery itself.

The first post-operative office visit is usually the most difficult and you may need someone to drive you to and from the office. All of the post-operative visits are much easier to tolerate if you have been following the post-operative care instructions. Your nose will be topically anesthetized (numbed) and decongested to help limit discomfort. Please keep in mind that one person's surgery is not exactly the same as another's, and thus you may have a different schedule or instructions to follow.

Nasal Irrigations

Nasal irrigations are designed to manually dislodge or loosen mucous and blood clots from the nasal and sinus cavities. They also help dissolve any biologic nasal dressing that may have been applied in the sinus cavities at the time of surgery. It is important to moisten this material on a scheduled basis to make post-operative cleaning less difficult. You will be given an instruction sheet on how to mix and administer these irrigations. The more moist you keep your nose, the better off you are. It is normal to have thick brown, even bloody, discharge from your nose for several days after the surgery. You should start your irrigations the day after surgery unless instructed otherwise. Your surgeon may also want you to purchase a nasal humidifier which is available at larger pharmacies and home goods stores. The use of a steamer is very comforting and may hasten healing.
**Antibiotics**

Antibiotics may be prescribed as part of your post-operative care. In most instances, you will be given a prescription during your pre-operative office visit. Your antibiotic regimen may change according to culture results (information from the microbiology lab). Please take your antibiotics as prescribed. You may also consider eating a cup of yogurt with active culture (sold at any grocery store), or Acidophilus pills (sold over-the-counter at any pharmacy). They are used to replenish the normal bacterial content of your gastrointestinal tract.

**Oral Steroids (Prednisone or Medrol)**

Depending on your sinus disease, you may be prescribed an oral steroid regimen that will likely begin prior to or immediately after your surgery. If so, you will be provided with a handout regarding these medications. It is important to remember to take these medications as prescribed and to never abruptly stop.

**Nasal Sprays**

Most nasal sprays will be stopped for a short period (weeks) immediately after surgery. You will be given instructions during one of your post-operative visits when to restart these medications, if at all.

**Nasal Packing**

On some occasions it may be necessary to place traditional nasal packing in your nose at the completion of surgery. If so, it will usually be removed at your first post-operative visit. Please do not remove it by yourself at home. During some procedures a dissolvable biologic dressing which helps limit bleeding and promote healing will be placed in the sinus cavities at the end of surgery. Some patients will have no material placed in the sinus cavities. These decisions are made at the time of surgery.

**Important Instructions to Follow**

- **Begin your nasal irrigations the day after surgery.** You will be given a separate instruction sheet on how to perform this properly.
- **If you are prescribed antibiotics and/or oral steroids, take them as directed.**
- **If you are taking nasal sprays prior to surgery, stop unless otherwise directed.**
- **If you are experiencing any pain, take your pain medication as prescribed.** If your pain medication is too strong, you may take Extra Strength Tylenol (acetaminophen).
- **In general, you may resume your other medications the day after surgery.** If you take asthma medications they should be continued the day of surgery. If you have questions about your medications, please check with your surgeon or your primary physician.
- **If you are taking blood thinners (Aspirin, Plavix, Coumadin, Lovenox, etc.),** on the recommendations of a physician, ask your physician the best time to resume these medications. This should be discussed with your surgeon during your pre-operative visit.
- **You may change the dressing under the tip of your nose as often as necessary.** This dressing is designed to keep you clean, and you may remove it if your nose is not running.
- **Eat soft and light foods and stay well hydrated until you are able to tolerate a regular diet.** You may experience temporary nausea as a result of the anesthesia.
- **Make arrangements for someone to drive you home after surgery.**
- **Rest and relax after surgery!**
Avoid the Following During the 2 Weeks After Your Surgery

• Do not engage in any strenuous activity, heavy lifting, or bending over.
• Do not blow your nose vigorously for 1 week. You may lightly blow your nose during the 2nd post-operative week. Occasionally you may be given instructions not to blow your nose for longer periods of time.
• Do not pick, prod, or poke your nose.
• Do not resist the urge to sneeze or cough. Instead, sneeze or cough with your mouth open.
• Do not take non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAIDS) medications for pain (i.e. Aspirin, Ibuprofen, Advil, Motrin, Aleve, Naprosyn, etc.). Instead, take your pain medication as prescribed or Extra Strength Tylenol (acetaminophen).
• Do not take any supplements or herbal remedies that may increase your risk of bleeding (Vitamin E, Garlic, Ginkgo, Ginger, Sal Palmetto, etc.)
• Limit alcoholic beverages. Alcohol is dehydrating, increases your risk of bleeding, and should not be mixed with your pain medication.
• Avoid cigarette smoking. If you smoke, please do your best to quit or at least significantly limit your cigarette usage. Tobacco smoke is known to adversely affect post-operative healing and increase the risk of anesthesia.

CALL THE OFFICE (973-644-0808) IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS

• Excessive bleeding (bright red blood) that cannot be controlled by squeezing the nostrils together for 10 to 15 minutes. It is normal to experience some bleeding out of the nose or down the throat for many days after sinus surgery. You may also have some normal blood-streaking in your mucus.
• Eye swelling or changes in your vision including blurry, double, or decreased vision.
• Fever/temperature > 100.8°F.
• Persistent clear watery drainage from your nose.
• Worsening headaches and/or neck stiffness.
• Pain uncontrolled by your prescribed pain medication.
• Persistent nausea or vomiting.

**In the event that you experience a medical emergency or are unable to contact the office, please go to the nearest Emergency Room.

Post-Operative Visit Checklist

□ You may need someone to drive you to and from the office. Please plan accordingly.

□ If you are still having pain, take your prescribed pain medication or Extra Strength Tylenol (acetaminophen) 1 hour prior to your scheduled visit. The nose is most sensitive during the immediate days after surgery.

□ Eat and drink prior to your visit.

□ Bring a list of your medications and any questions with you.