

# Cautery of the Septum or Turbinates

## For all enquiries:

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ENT North

## General Information

- After an anaesthetic, it is common to feel groggy for up to 24 hours. Children are often quite disorientated for the first hour or so. Nausea ± vomiting can also occur. Medication can be given if this is difficult to tolerate. You will not be allowed to drive yourself home after the anaesthetic, or to go home alone. Please arrange for someone to collect you from the hospital and take you home.
- The nose always gets badly blocked and a bit 'drippy' for 2-3 weeks after the surgery, as the burnt tissue initially swells. It will begin to get better after that. Blowing the nose during this time will not help to unblock the nose and may cause bleeding. Sniffing is fine. If you sneeze, try to keep your mouth open so the majority of the air goes out this way.
- We don't expect any pain, unless the surgery has been combined with another operation. It is common to have ear pain with tonsil surgery, so this may be one reason you/your child complains of ear pain if this has also been done.
- There are no restrictions in what you can and can't eat after this operation.

## Pain Relief/Antibiotics

- Your surgeon will provide a script for pain relief, or instructions on what to buy from the chemist. Unless another procedure has been done, we don't expect anything beyond mild pain in the first day or so, and commonly no pain at all. Simple pain relief like paracetamol is usually enough.
- If your surgeon prescribes antibiotics for you, take them as directed.
- You may be asked to rinse your nose out with salty water 2-3 times a day if the septum has been cauterized for nose bleeds. You can make up your own, and sniff it into the nose from your palm. A batch can be made and stored in a sealed container for several days.
  - Add 1tsp table salt and 2tsp bicarbonate of soda to 1 litre tap water, boiled and cooled.
- Applying some ointment (e.g., Vaseline, Kenacomb, Chlorsig) inside each nostril morning and night after rinsing can also help healing. Continue with these until the nose feels well healed and you can breathe easily through it (commonly for up to one month after the operation).

## Activities

- Rest up for the first few days after the operation. Gentle exercise (walking, gentle gardening etc) is fine if you feel well enough to do these.
- Avoid strenuous exercise (team sports, jogging, heavy weights etc) for two weeks after the operation and be sensible when you recommence these.
- Children generally are quite sensible about increasing their activity as they recover from their operation, so be guided by their behaviour in terms of what they can do.

## Return to School/Work

Most people are fine to return to normal school/work after 2-3 days, unless the operation is combined with another procedure.

### If Bleeding Occurs

- Sit up and tilt the head slightly forward, spit out any blood, squeeze the soft part of the nose closed for 10min without releasing, suck on some ice cubes/chips, put a cool cloth across the back of the neck.
- Squeeze for another ten minutes if bleeding continues after pressure is released.
- If this doesn't stop the bleeding, please contact your surgeon for further advice. If the bleeding is heavy, or if you are worried about your safety, please call an Ambulance.
- Dr Amott advises both adult and paediatric patients to present to Austin Health if further assessment is needed. She can care for you there and has access to continuous back-up from other ENT surgeons, the Emergency Department and Theatre, if those services are needed.

### When to Seek Medical Advice

- A fever of >38degrees.
- Any bleeding after discharge.
- Excessive sedation from pain relief tablets.
- Excessive pain, which doesn't respond to pain relief.
- If you/your child can't drink enough fluid/eat enough to avoid dehydration.
- If you need to return to hospital due to post-operative complications, Dr Amott advises that, if possible, both adult and paediatric patients attend Austin Health in Heidelberg. She can care for you there and has access to continuous back-up from other ENT surgeons, the Emergency Department and Operating Theatre, if those services are needed. Most other major metropolitan public hospitals also have emergency ENT services, including Royal Children's Hospital or Sunshine Hospital for paediatric patients specifically. Our other surgeons all have appointments at various public hospitals – please discuss which locations they work at if you do need to present for emergency care.
- DO NOT PRESENT TO A PRIVATE HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT following discharge for any post-operative concerns or symptoms. Our surgeons do not work at these hospitals apart from their designated operative sessions and are unable to provide safe care for you at those locations outside your surgical admission.

Please call your surgeon for advice if any of the above occur, or if you have any other concerns.

### Follow-Up

- For routine surgery, please make an appointment about one month after your operation to see your surgeon. In some circumstances your surgeon may ask you to come back earlier, in which case follow their instructions.
- Your surgeon may make this appointment for you after your operation. Please feel free to contact the rooms if the date, time or location is inconvenient, as it is usually easy to change.