

Post-Op Procedure for ESS

1. Nasal Drainage:

Right after surgery you will have drainage from your nose. At first, there may be a small amount of bright red bleeding, but do not be alarmed. A small amount is normal and may continue through the first week. A gauze dressing will be placed under your nose to absorb this drainage. It may be necessary to change the dressing several times on the day of your surgery. *Any bright red bleeding that lasts more than ten minutes or is heavy should be reported to your doctor immediately.* Old blood, which accumulated during surgery, is dark reddish-brown. It will drain for a week *or more*. It is of no concern. Drainage may continue for several weeks. The drainage may be thicker and *yellow-green in color. This is also normal and is not a sign of infection.*

2. Nasal Congestion:

For the first week after surgery, your head will feel stuffy. This is because you will have swelling of the mucous membranes of your nose. This is normal and expected. The stuffiness will gradually decrease over the next few weeks, so please be patient. After this, an improvement in your nasal breathing should be noticed. Nasal packing may or may not be left in place after surgery. If you do have this packing, you will need to return in three or four days to have it removed by your doctor.

3. Discomfort After Surgery:

There is some discomfort after surgery. Rather than actual pain, it is more of an ache or pressure. This pressure may increase somewhat during the first week. That is due to increased swelling and the accumulation of sinus secretions. If a pain medication is prescribed, take as ordered. If none was ordered, take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) according to package directions. *Do not take aspirin or medications, which contain aspirin.* These products may increase bleeding. For additional pain relief, place ice packs over your cheeks every three or four hours for 15 to 20 minutes. It may take five to six weeks for full recovery. Please be patient during this time.

4. Medication:

Take all medications as prescribed by your doctor. Usually, an antibiotic will be ordered to prevent an infection. Decongestants, nasal sprays, and sometimes a mild steroid are ordered to aid with healing and comfort.

5. **Cleaning Your Nose:**

You will be given instructions for cleaning your nose. Generally, this is taught at your first postoperative visit. You will be taught to use a salt-water nasal irrigation. This will help to keep the nose clean. To help your nose and sinuses heal faster; clean your nose as instructed and take all medications as prescribed.

Salt-water Irrigation:

- a. Obtain an adult size soft ear bulb syringe from your pharmacy.
- b. Mix one-eighth (1/8) teaspoon salt and one (1) teaspoon baking soda into two (2) cups warm water.
- c. Draw the solution into the bulb syringe.
- d. Stand over a sink. Bend your head forward and instill a bulb-full of solution into one nostril.
- e. Open your mouth. Let the solution run into the sink from both your nose and mouth.
- f. Vigorously flush each nostril with two (2) bulbs-full of solution.
- g. Perform the irrigations three or four times a day until you are instructed to stop. After one or two weeks, the liquid should be clear after the flushing.

6. **Postoperative Visits:**

It is very important to keep all appointments after surgery. At these visits, the doctor will clean and examine the operative area. This cleaning prevents scarring. These appointments start four to seven days after surgery. The frequency of the visits varies depending on your rate of healing. As a general rule, you can expect four to six visits during the first one or two months after surgery.

We recommend that you eat before arriving for your appointment. Also, take your pain medication one-hour prior to the first and second visits. If you are taking Tylenol® with codeine, have someone drive you. This medication may cause drowsiness. On occasion, it may be necessary for you to have something stronger for pain at the first and second visit. The doctor will discuss this option with you.

PRECAUTIONS DURING THE FIRST WEEK

1. **Activity:**

Even though your surgery may seem minor, your body needs additional rest for healing. You should stay at home for one day. Observe for bleeding during that time. Call your doctor immediately if you have any bright red bleeding which lasts longer than 10 minutes or if bleeding is heavy. If the surgery is done under local anesthesia, you should gradually increase your activities over three to four days. If general anesthesia is used, increase your

activities over one week period. Physical activity (swimming, jogging, and exercise) may be resumed after two to three weeks if approved by your surgeon.

2. Do Not Blow Your Nose:

It is important that you do not blow your nose. You may sniff back secretions. Blowing the nose places too much pressure on the operative site. It may cause bleeding. Usually, you may blow your nose after the first post-op visit.

3. Sneezing:

If you must sneeze, do so through your mouth with your mouth open. Sneezing through your mouth reduces pressure and discomfort of the operative site.

4. Do Not Lift Heavy Objects:

Avoid bending over and lifting heavy objects (over 5 pounds) during the first two to three weeks after surgery. These activities place pressure on the operative site and may cause bleeding.

5. Suggestions For Comfort:

- a. Keep your head elevated on three pillows. This position will help decrease swelling and allows for better drainage of nasal discharge.
- b. Ice packs may be placed over your cheeks every three to four hours for 15-20 minutes. This will help decrease swelling and discomfort.
- c. Use a cool vapor humidifier at your bedside for the first week after surgery. This will help loosen secretions and prevent crusting of the nose.
- d. Take all medications as prescribed.

If you would like to speak with a nurse, please call the Department of Otolaryngology at (408) 236-4570 Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

CALL YOUR DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

1. Any vision problems such as:
 - Loss of vision
 - Double vision
 - Bulging of one or both eyes
 - Black eyes
2. Neck stiffness (you are not able to touch your chin to your chest) in addition to fever, laziness, and marked headache.
3. Fever over 100° F (38° C).

If you have any questions or concerns please call your doctor at (408) 236-4570 Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. After 5 p.m. and on the weekend, call Medical Advice at (408) 236-6440 until 9:30 p.m. After 9:30 p.m., call the Emergency Room at (408) 236-4400.

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