

**Questions?**

Contact: **The  
Nurse's Voice-Mail  
Line at  
206-598-0413**

Monday thru Friday  
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Your call will be  
returned as soon  
as possible.

**After hours, call  
UWMC Paging:  
206-598-6190** and  
ask them to page the  
Otolaryngologist  
on-call.



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON  
MEDICAL CENTER

**Cosmetic Surgery Center**

Box 354716  
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206-598-8111



# Septoplasty/ Rhinoplasty

*How to prepare for and what  
to expect of your operation*

**Activity**

Avoid nasal trauma. Restrict any sport activities involving body contact for 4-6 weeks and strenuous activities or heavy lifting for 3 weeks, including pushing and pulling.

**Medications**

- Take pain medications as prescribed. Over-the-counter medication such as Tylenol or Advil can also be used. Do not take Advil until 2 weeks after the procedure. Take antibiotics as prescribed.
- Use saline spray 3-6 times daily.

**Post Operative Visits**

You will be seen 5-10 days after surgery. Your doctor will let you know when to make another appointment at each visit.

**Return to Work**

Depending on what you do, most people take 1-2 weeks off with rhinoplasty, and 3 days to 1 week with septoplasty.

**Call the Clinic Nurse or Doctor  
On-Call If You Have:**

- Continuous bleeding from your nose
- Yellow or greenish nasal drainage
- Excessive pain unrelieved with your pain medication
- Persistent nausea or vomiting
- Rash or itching
- Temperature greater than 101.5° F

A procedure to alter the nasal septum is called a septoplasty. It is usually performed when the septum is deformed, fractured, or injured and normal breathing and nasal drainage is altered. Rhinoplasty is a procedure to improve the appearance or function of the nose. Often the two procedures are performed together. This pamphlet outlines how best to prepare for this operation and what to expect from your surgery.



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## How to Prepare for Your Septo-Rhinoplasty

### *Before Your Operation*

Do **NOT** take aspirin, ibuprofen, or similar products two weeks prior to your operation. These products thin the blood and prevent clotting in the usual amount of time after surgery.

Do **NOT** drive yourself or take a taxi home from the hospital. Arrange for an adult to drive you home from the hospital and stay with you for the first evening.

### *24 Hours Before Your Surgery*

You will receive a call from the Pre-Surgery nurses on the afternoon before your operation. They will tell you when to come to the hospital and where to report. They will remind you not to eat or drink anything after a certain time, to have someone available to drive you home, and whether you should take your regular medications or not. If you have not received this phone call by **5:00 p.m.**, please call 206-598-6334 and talk to the Pre-Surgery nurse. Patients scheduled for Monday surgeries will be called the Friday before by **5:00 p.m.**

You will be given a bottle of oxymetazoline (Afrin) nasal spray on the day of surgery. The surgery nurse will tell you when to spray each nostril every 15 minutes one hour prior to surgery. This medication opens up your nasal passages as much as possible prior to surgery.

## What to Expect After Your Operation

### *Precautions and Self-Care to Speed Your Recovery*

Because you will have received a general anesthetic, it is important that you **NOT** do the following for 24 hours: drive, drink any alcoholic beverage, travel alone, sign any legal papers, or be responsible for the care of another person.

### *Nasal Surgery Care*

- You may have oozing from the nose for several days. This may be bloody after surgery. Apply a dressing under your nose and change as needed.
- Facial swelling and bruising beneath the eyes may occur if rhinoplasty is done. Keep your head elevated at night on 2 or more pillows. The swelling should diminish the next week, but may take several weeks in some patients.
- A bedside humidifier may help decrease crusting and dryness. Use saline nasal spray to each nostril 7-10 times a day. This will help remove debris and prevent crusting and dryness. Each nostril should be cleaned gently 2 times a day with the tip of a q-tip soaked in peroxide. A small amount of antibiotic ointment should then be applied to the outermost part of the nostril. Avoid nose blowing for 2 weeks. If you need to sneeze, do so with mouth open. This relieves pressure.
- With rhinoplasty you may have an external nasal splint dressing. In about 7 days, this splint will be removed. Keep the splint dry to avoid dislodging it. Internal nasal splints may be present with septoplasty. These will be removed in 5-7 days by your doctor.