

# Common Questions About Nasal and Sinus Surgery

## Can I exercise after surgery?

For 1 week after surgery:

- Rest as much as you can.
- Avoid activities that increase your heart rate or breathing, such as biking, jogging, weightlifting, or aerobic exercise.
- Avoid lifting, pulling, or pushing anything that weighs more than 10 to 15 pounds. (A gallon of water weighs almost 9 pounds.)
- Avoid bending over.

## Can I eat a normal diet after surgery?

You may resume your normal diet after surgery. If your stomach is upset, try plain or bland foods such as toast, yogurt, or potatoes.



*Rest as much as you can for the first week after surgery.*

## When can I fly after surgery?

If you want to take a trip, wait until after your first follow-up visit.

At this visit, ask your surgeon if travel is safe for you. Your first follow-up visit is usually 1 to 2 weeks after surgery.

## Can I use my CPAP after surgery?

Before surgery, talk with your surgeon about using your CPAP. Together, you will create a plan for using CPAP safely.

## When can I shower or bathe?

- The anesthesia you received for your surgery will affect your ability to do normal tasks for about a day. If you feel dizzy, light-headed or unwell, do **not** shower, bathe, or be by yourself.
- Starting 24 hours after surgery, you may shower or bathe. Avoid putting your head under water until you talk to your surgeon at the first follow-up visit.
- For more information on recovery from anesthesia, please read the handout “Recovering at Home After Anesthesia.”

## When can I return to work?

Most patients return to work about 1 week after surgery. If your employer requests a FMLA or short-term disability form, please fax the form to 206.598.6611. You can also upload it to eCare.



Scan for a  
digital copy of  
this handout.

## When do I start sinus rinses after surgery?

Start your sinus rinses the day after surgery. Do them 4 to 6 times a day. Rinses help keep your sinuses moist, clean out any debris, and help lessen the sinus cleaning needed at your follow-up visits.

Try warming the saline solution in the microwave for 15 seconds before doing your rinse. This can be very comforting and soothing to the sinuses and nostrils. Be sure to check the water temperature before using it in your nasal rinse.

It is normal to see clots, bloody discharge, and mucus while rinsing after surgery.

## Which sinus and nasal irrigation device should I use?

We advise using a NeilMed sinus irrigation device. The device is not costly, it is easy to clean, and you can control the pressure.

Other irrigation devices, such as a Neti Pot or Navage, are also OK to use. These can be helpful for certain conditions. You may also prefer them for other reasons.

## When can I resume using my nasal sprays?

Ask your surgeon about nasal sprays at your first follow-up visit. Most patients can resume using nasal sprays such as Nasonex, Flonase, and Astelin about 1 week after surgery.

## Is it normal to feel congested after surgery?

You will have some swelling in your nose and sinuses after surgery. It is normal to feel congested or feel like you have a bad “head cold.” The congestion should improve after a few weeks. Full recovery can take 3 months or more.

## Will I have pain after surgery?

### Sore Throat

Your throat may be sore after having a tube down your throat during surgery (*intubation*). This problem should resolve after a few days. Try sucking on throat lozenges, drinking hot tea with honey, or eating popsicles to help ease soreness.

### Pain Control

It is normal to have mild to moderate pain after surgery. The pain can feel like pressure, burning, a sinus infection, or a dull ache.

Follow your doctor’s instructions for pain control. Most patients use an over-the-counter pain medicine such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) to help ease the pain and swelling. Your doctor may want you to alternate acetaminophen with ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin).

You will also go home with a small supply of prescription pain pills (*opioids*) for any severe “breakthrough” pain. Opioids can affect your response time and ability to reason.

While you are taking opioids:

- Do **not** drive.
- Do **not** use machines (such as a lawn mower)
- Do **not** drink alcohol
- Do **not** make important decisions or sign legal papers
- Do **not** be responsible for children, pets, or an adult who needs care

## **Will I have packing in my nose after surgery?**

You will not have packing (dressing) in your nose. You might have an internal splint, spacers, or stents. These will be removed at your first or second follow-up visit.

## **Will I have bruising or swelling after surgery?**

You may have some mild swelling around the nose and cheeks. Most patients do not have bruising. Call the clinic if you have any bruising.

To help with swelling during your recovery, try using a cold compress. Apply it for 15 minutes every hour while you are awake.

### **Questions?**

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

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