



Endoscopic Sinus Surgery FAQ Sheet

How is it done?

Unless your surgeon tells you otherwise, no incisions or cuts will be made on your face. The surgery is performed using small cameras, about the size of a pencil, that go through your nostrils and show the inside of your nose and sinuses on a large TV screen. The openings to the sinuses are made bigger using several tools which cut and remove small pieces of bone and tissue from the inside of the nose.

How long does the surgery take?

It depends on what your surgeon needs to do. In addition to the time it takes to go to sleep and wake back up, the surgery may take anywhere from a few minutes to a few hours. Each surgery is different. “Getting ready for surgery” and “getting ready to leave” after surgery is over can both add a couple of hours to this, so it’s good to plan for at least one half a day being spent at the hospital or surgery center.

Will I be asleep for the surgery?

Yes. During surgery, an anesthesiologist will give you medication through your veins and inhaled through your lungs that will keep you in a deep sleep. This may make you feel groggy for a day or so even after the surgery is over. Sometimes, you and your surgeon may decide to do more minor sinus surgeries awake or in the office. This is usually on a case-by-case basis.

How much pain will I have?

Amazingly, most people have very little pain afterwards. We recommend taking Tylenol (acetaminophen) every 6 hours after surgery for the first 2 to 3 days, whether you think you need it or not. If stronger prescription strength pain medication is needed your surgeon can provide this for you.

Will my nose be packed afterwards?

Not too long ago, people would have gauze or other packing put in their nose after surgery, leading many to believe sinus surgery was a miserable, painful thing. We only use small amounts of dissolvable foam that help the inside of your nose heal. Most of this will wash away before you come back to see your surgeon, but some of it usually needs to be cleaned out in the office. If a septoplasty is performed, small stents may or may not be placed. These will be removed at your first postoperative appointment if so.

I hear that removing the packing can be painful, is that true?

If your surgeon needs to remove anything from your nose when you return after surgery, there will be some discomfort. The surgeon will spray medications in your nose before trying to remove anything, which should help to numb the nose so that you do not feel it.



When do I come back to the office?

Usually your first post-operative appointment is one to two weeks after your surgery. This appointment is usually made for you during the “check-out” process on the day you schedule your surgery. If you do not think this happened, please call 804-525-4231 to schedule an appointment.

How can I make sure my surgery works?

The best thing you can do for your nose after surgery is to wash the inside with salt water irrigations several times throughout the day. Performing your nasal rinses will help dissolve any foam packing the surgeon may have placed and help soften any scabs that might form after the surgery. Ask your surgeon if you should use any steroid sprays or medications in your nose after surgery; usually you will be given a prescription for steroid pills which may last till you return for your first post-op appointment.

When can I go back to work?

This depends on what you do at work. We do not want you to do any heavy lifting or strenuous activity. If you think that your normal job requires straining or would increase your heart rate or blood pressure, it's better to wait at least a week before returning to work. If your job is mostly office based and does not require a lot of physical activity, you can go back to work when you feel ready. Often this is only 2-3 days after surgery.

When can I drive?

You can drive the day after surgery as long as you are not using any prescription pain medications (for example: Vicodin, Norco, Tylenol #3, Percocet or any other narcotics). Someone will have to drive you home the day of surgery. You should not drive if you are using any prescription pain medications.

Will I need to have surgery ever again?

Not everyone has the same problem with their nose or sinuses. Most of the time surgery and continued medical therapy such as sinus irrigations, steroid sprays, and allergy pills can keep you from needing surgery again. Some patients will get better with surgery alone. Patients with nasal polyps are more likely to need more surgery.