



# HUNTERDON OTOLARYNGOLOGY ASSOCIATES

## POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING SINUS SURGERY

### **RECUPERATION**

Recuperation from surgery is variable and will depend upon several factors including:

1. Pre-operative sinus disease severity,
2. extent of surgery performed,
3. specific technique utilized (most of the time this will involve high-magnification fiberoptic telescopes)
4. type of anesthesia utilized,
5. individual pain thresholds.

Generally, 7-10 days should be allotted off from work. Two or three weeks may be required if your job involves strenuous physical activity.

### **DISCOMFORT**

In general, some post-operative discomfort should be expected. This discomfort will usually be in the form of mid-facial pressure or headache, and may persist in varying degrees for several weeks. Severe pain is extremely unusual and should be brought to the physician's or nurse's attention. The discomfort experienced is the result of swelling and accumulation of secretions. Relief may generally be obtained by taking the pain medication prescribed for you. Over-the-counter preparations containing a decongestant such as Sudafed might also be helpful (assuming no contraindications to decongestant such as hypertension or heart disease exists). A product for mild discomfort which contains a decongestant is Advil Cold & Sinus. For additional relief, ice packs over the eyes and cheeks for 15-20 minutes every hour for the first 12-24 hours may be helpful. **DO NOT TAKE ASPIRIN OR ASPIRIN CONTAINING PRODUCTS FOR ONE WEEK FOLLOWING SURGERY.** Please be patient during this timeframe; it may take 6-8 weeks for full recovery.

### **CONGESTION**

Nasal congestion is normal after the surgery and may persist for several weeks. Nasal packing is not usually placed in after surgery. In the unusual event that packing is placed, it will be removed in 1-3 days and breathing through the nose will generally be difficult during this time and should not be a cause for concern. Post-operatively nasal cleansing should be started as follows:

#### ***A. Salt Water Flushing***

1. Use AYR, OCEAN or similar saline spray—2 squirts in each nostril 6-8 times daily for 2-3 weeks.
2. Use salt water irrigation by mixing 1/2 tsp of salt and 1 tsp of baking soda into 2 cups of warm water. Draw this solution into a bulb syringe and stand over a sink. Bend your head forward and open mouth. Instill a bulb of the solution into each nostril and let the solution run into the sink from both nose and mouth. Repeat process and perform irrigation 3 times daily for 2-3 weeks.

#### ***B. Ponaris or Nasovisc (only if instructed)***

1. Call your pharmacy to make sure they carry this spray. Several different pharmacies may need to be contacted. These medications are nasal emollients and are packaged with a dropper. Please ask your pharmacist to place it in an atomizer (or do it

- yourself by pouring the liquid into a clean, empty nasal spray bottle) and utilize several sprays in each nostril daily.
2. If utilizing both salt water irrigation and Ponaris, first spray/irrigate the nose with salt water and then use the Ponaris.

### **NASAL DRAINAGE**

Drainage from the nose is normal following nasal surgery. Initially, there may be bright red blood and this should not be cause for alarm. Any “mustache” gauze dressing placed may need to be changed periodically as soiling occurs. This dressing can generally be removed within 24 hours after surgery. **IF FRESH, HEAVY POST-OPERATIVE BLEEDING LASTS MORE THAN 15-20 MINUTES, PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE.** Please note that old blood which accumulates during the surgery is dark, reddish-brown. This may drain for 1-2 weeks following surgery and is NOT a cause for concern. Eventually, drainage will become thicker and yellow-green in color. This is normal and is not a sign of infection. Bright yellow drainage accompanied by pain is not normal and usually signifies an infection. This should be reported to our office.

Please take any antibiotic medication as prescribed. This is extremely important and will help prevent an infection and help your sinuses heal faster.

### **PRECAUTIONS**

- DO NOT BLOW YOUR NOSE for several weeks. Blowing your nose increases pressure on the operative site and may cause bleeding. Secretions may be sniffed back and expectorated.
- DO NOT LIFT HEAVY OBJECTS (over 25-30 lbs.) for 2-3 weeks after surgery. Also avoid bending.
- If you must sneeze, please do so with your mouth open to decrease intra-nasal pressure.
- Activity should be severely restricted for 24-48 hours. A gradual increase in activity level over one week is then appropriate. Heavy physical activity such as jogging, swimming, etc. may be resumed after 2-3 weeks as directed by the physician.

### **SUGGESTIONS**

- Keep head elevated.
- Use a cool vapor humidifier for 1-2 weeks. This will loosen secretions and prevent crusting.
- Again, take medication as directed.
- Eat something before your first post-operative visit. In the event you are still taking your pain medication, DO NOT DRIVE YOURSELF.

### **WHEN TO CALL YOUR PHYSICIAN**

- Any visual problems such as loss of vision, double vision, black eyes, or bulging eyes.
- Continuous tearing.
- Leakage of abundant clear fluid from the nose.

OUR DOCTORS OR NURSES ALWAYS MAY BE REACHED DURING OFFICE HOURS BY CALLING (908) 788-9131. IF A PROBLEM OCCURS AFTER HOURS, OUR COVERING PHYSICIAN MAY BE REACHED THROUGH OUR ANSWERING SERVICE BY CALLING (908) 788-9131.