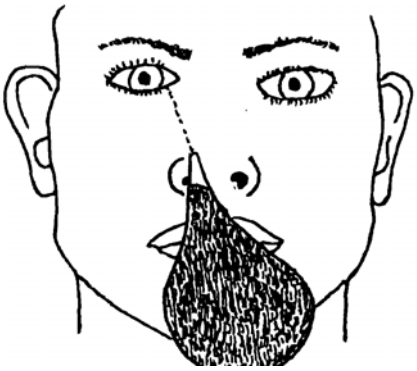
NOSE AND SINUS IRRIGATION
AFTER
FUNCTIONAL ENDOSCOPIC SINUS SURGERY



SALT-WATER IRRIGATION

If you are to use salt-water irrigation:

1. Obtain an adult-size nasal aspirator from your pharmacy.
2. Mix one-eighth (1/8) teaspoon of salt and one (1) teaspoon of baking soda into two (2) cups of warm water.
3. Draw the solution into the aspirator, getting all of the air out.
4. Stand over a sink. Bend your head forward and insert the aspirator inside the nose, past the nasal fold. Point the tip of the aspirator to the inside corner of the eye, on the same side you are irrigating. Evacuate the aspirator, gently immediately after surgery, but vigorously when the stents have been removed.
5. Open your mouth. Let the solution run into the sink from both your nose and mouth.
6. Vigorously flush each nostril with two (2) aspirators full of the solution.
7. Perform the irrigations two (2) or three (3) times a day until you are instructed to stop. After one (1) or two (2) weeks, the liquid should be clear after the flushing.

NOTE: You may be instructed to use both the steroid spray and the nasal irrigation. If so:

1. First, irrigate the nose.
2. Follow with the steroid spray.

2520 Aberdeen Boulevard • Gastonia, NC 28054 • **(704) 868-8400 • Fax (704) 868-8493**
1180 Wyke Road • Shelby, NC 28150 • **(704) 487- 9100 • Fax (704) 487-5230**
1212 Spruce Street • Suite 207 • Belmont, NC 28012 • **(704) 829-9374 • Fax (704) 671-6386**
www.entcarolina.com

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER ENDOSCOPIC SINUS SURGERY ('ESS")

1. *Nasal Drainage*

Immediately after surgery, you will have drainage from your nose. You may notice a small amount of bright red bleeding which is normal and may continue through the first week. Do not be alarmed, because this is normal. A gauze dressing will be placed on your upper lip to absorb this drainage. It may be necessary to change the dressing several times on the day of your surgery. **Any bright red bleeding lasting more than ten minutes (or which 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 and is of no concern. Drainage may continue for several weeks. The drainage may become thicker and yellow-green in color. This is also normal.

2. *Nasal Congestion*

The stuffiness in your head during the first week after surgery is caused by swollen mucous membranes in your nose and is to be expected. This stuffiness will gradually decrease over the next few weeks, so, please be patient. After several weeks, you should notice an improvement in your nasal breathing. Nasal packing may or may not be left in place after surgery. If you do have this packing, you will need to return to the office to have it removed by your doctor.

3. *Discomfort After Surgery*

There will be some pain after surgery. You may notice an increase of pressure during the first week which is due to increased swelling and the accumulation of sinus secretions. Prescribed pain medication should be taken as directed. **Do not take aspirin or medications which contain aspirin, because they may increase bleeding.** For additional pain relief, place ice packs on your cheeks for periods of 15 to 20 minutes every three (3) or four (4). It may take five (5) to six (6) weeks for full recovery. Please be patient during this time.

4. *Medications*

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. Please take ***all*** of the prescribed medications as directed by your doctor.

REMINDER: We can only refill narcotic prescriptions during normal business hours. Please make sure that you have a sufficient supply of medication to last throughout the night, the weekends, and holidays.

5. *Nosebleeds*

Depending on your specific situation, your doctor may or may not place packs in your nose. If no packs were placed, or if they were placed and have been removed, you may experience some bleeding. It is helpful to have Afrin Decongestant Spray (an over-the-counter product) available in case this happens. If bleeding occurs, spray the nose with 2 to 3 sprays of Afrin. Try to sit or lie down with your head elevated, and pinch your nose to apply pressure. Placing an ice pack over your nose may help slow bleeding. Call us if bleeding persists.

6. *Postoperative Visits*

It is very important to keep all appointments after surgery. During these visits, the doctor will examine and clean the surgery site. This cleaning will prevent scarring. The frequency of your post-operative visits depends on your individual rate of healing. As a general rule, you can expect four to six visits during the first two months after surgery. We suggest that you eat before arriving for your appointment.

PRECAUTIONS DURING THE FIRST WEEK

1. **Activity.** Even though your surgery may seem minor, it is not. Your body needs additional rest for healing, and you should plan to stay at home the day of, and the day after, surgery. Watch for bleeding during this time. Call your doctor immediately if you have any bright red bleeding which lasts longer than 10 minutes or if the bleeding is heavy. You should gradually increase your activities over a one-week period. If your surgeon approves, physical activity (i.e., swimming, jogging, and exercise) may be resumed after 2 or 3 weeks.
2. **Do Not Blow Your Nose.** It is important that you do not blow your nose. You may sniff back or irrigate secretions. Blowing your nose may cause bleeding, because it places too much pressure on the surgery site. Usually, you may blow your nose after your first post-operative visit.
3. **Sneezing.** If you must sneeze, do so with your mouth open. Sneezing through your mouth reduces pressure and discomfort on the surgery site.
4. **Do Not Lift Heavy Objects.** Avoid bending over and lifting heavy objects (over 10 pounds) during the first two to three weeks after surgery. These activities place pressure on the surgery site and may cause bleeding.

SUGGESTIONS FOR COMFORT

1. Keeping your head elevated on three pillows will help decrease swelling and will allow better drainage of any nasal discharge.
2. Placing ice packs over your cheeks for 15 to 20 minute periods every three to four hours will help decrease swelling and discomfort.
3. Using a cool-vapor humidifier at your bedside for the first week after surgery will help loosen excretions and help prevent crusting of the nose.
4. Take ***all*** medications as prescribed.
5. **WARNING**: Aspirin and aspirin-containing products may cause bleeding; therefore, do not take Ibuprofen (i.e., Advil, Motrin) for 2 to 3 weeks after surgery.

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

1. Vision problems:
   - Loss of vision
   - Double vision
   - Black eyes
   - Bulging of one or both eyes
2. Neck stiffness (you are not able to touch your chin to your chest), in addition to fever, sluggishness, and moderate to severe headache.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call your doctor at (704) 868-8400.

For additional information regarding ear, nose and throat problems, please visit our website at www.entcarolina.com and/or the American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery website at www.entnet.org.