

# Cautery of the Septum or Turbinates

## General Information

- After an anaesthetic, it is common to feel groggy for up to 24 hours. Children are often quite disoriented for the first hour or so. Nausea +/- vomiting can also occur. Medication can be given if this is difficult to tolerate. You will not be allowed to drive yourself home after the anaesthetic, or to go home alone. Please arrange for someone to collect you from the hospital and take you home.
- The nose always gets badly blocked for 2-3 weeks after the surgery, as the burnt tissue initially swells. It will begin to get better after that. Blowing the nose during this time will not help to unblock the nose and may cause bleeding. Sniffing is fine. If you sneeze, try to keep the mouth open so the majority of the air goes out this way.
- Pain is not expected, unless the surgery has been combined with another operation. It is common to have ear pain with tonsil surgery, so this may be one reason you/your child complains of ear pain if these have also been done.
- There are no restrictions in what you can and can't eat after this operation.

## Pain Relief/Antibiotics

- Your surgeon will provide a prescription for pain relief, or instructions on what to buy from the chemist. Unless another procedure has been done, we don't expect anything beyond mild pain in the first day or so, and commonly no pain at all. Simple pain relief like paracetamol or ibuprofen is usually enough.
- If your surgeon prescribes antibiotics for you, take them as directed.
- Commonly, you will be asked to rinse the nose out with salty water 2-3 times a day until the swelling goes down. There are many different brands available from your local chemist (e.g. FLO nasal care, Narium rinse), or you can make up your own. A batch can be made and stored in a sealed container for several days.
  - Add 2tsp table salt and 1tsp bicarbonate of soda to 1 litre tap water, boiled and cooled.
  - Sniff this into your nose from your palm, or using a syringe or bulb irrigator.
- Applying some ointment (e.g. Vaseline, Kenacomb, Chlorsig) inside each nostril morning and night after rinsing can also help healing.

## Activities

- Rest up for the first few days after the operation. Gentle exercise (walking, gentle gardening etc) is fine if you feel well enough to do these.
- Avoid strenuous exercise (team sports, jogging, heavy weights etc) for two weeks after the operation, and be sensible when you recommence these.
- Children generally are quite sensible about increasing their activity as they recover from their operation, so be guided by their behaviour in terms of what they can do.

## Return to School/Work

Most people are fine to return to normal school/work after 2-3 days, unless the operation is combined with another procedure.

**Northern Health**

185 Cooper Street, Epping 3076  
35 Johnstone St, Broadmeadows 3047

Tel: 03 8405 8000

[www.nh.org.au](http://www.nh.org.au)

## If Bleeding Occurs

- Sit up and tilt the head slightly forward, spit out any blood, squeeze the soft part of the nose closed for 10min without releasing, suck on some ice cubes/chips, put a cool cloth across the back of the neck.
- Squeeze for another ten minutes if bleeding continues after pressure is released.
- If this doesn't stop the bleeding, return to your closest Emergency Department for ENT assessment. If the bleeding is heavy, or if you are worried about your safety to drive, please call an Ambulance.
- **Please note that The Northern Hospital does NOT have a permanent ENT doctor present on site. Please do NOT return to our Emergency Department if you are actively bleeding, as we will need to transfer you elsewhere for care. Suitable alternatives include The Austin Hospital, Sunshine Hospital or Royal Children's Hospital (children only).**

## When to Seek Medical Advice

- A fever of >38 degrees.
- Any bleeding after discharge.
- Excessive sedation from pain relief tablets.
- Excessive pain, which doesn't respond to pain relief
- If you/your child can't drink enough fluid/eat enough to avoid dehydration.

## Follow-Up

- We ask most patients to make an appointment with your family doctor about one month after surgery to make sure you've healed and the problem the operation was designed to treat has resolved. Please ask them to refer you back to us if it hasn't, or call our outpatient department (below) and ask for the nurse managing the ENT clinic to discuss whether you need another appointment or not.
- In a limited number of cases, your ENT doctor will ask you to come back for an appointment (e.g. if you had a biopsy taken as part of your surgery). Your nurse should be able to clarify if this is the case before you are discharged.

## Contact Details:

Northern Hospital Children's Ward: (03) 8405 8415

Northern Hospital Day Surgical Centre (adults): (03) 8405 8501

Northern Hospital Outpatient Department: (03) 8405 8335

Medical Advice (for emergencies only, please):

- Mon-Fri 8am-4pm: (03) 8405 8000, ask for the 'ENT Registrar On Call'
- After hours: Austin Health (03) 9496 5000, ask for the 'ENT Registrar On Call'

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