



Functional Endoscopic Sinus Surgery (F.E.S.S.)

Indications

Sinus surgery is designed to remove infection from chronically diseased sinuses and to improve sinus drainage and ventilation. Generally, the procedure is performed under direct visualization using nasal endoscopes.

Hospital Stay

Generally you will be discharged on the same day as surgery.

Potential Risks of Surgery

As with any surgery, there are not only benefits but also risks. The following information will help you understand the risks of sinus surgery. As with any operation, there may be some unanticipated complications besides those listed here.

- If excessive bleeding occurs during the procedure, the surgeon's view through the endoscope may be impaired. This increases the difficulty in distinguishing normal from abnormal tissue and therefore increases the risk of a serious complication. If heavy bleeding occurs and impairs the surgeon's visualization, the surgeon will stop the procedure, as it is more prudent to attempt a second surgery under different conditions than to risk injury. A nasal pack is occasionally, but not routinely used for one to two days following surgery to decrease the risk of bleeding. This is usually well tolerated, unlike the tight packing used for traditional external sinus surgery in the past.
- As with any surgery, infection can occur. Although endoscopic sinus surgery usually relieves infection, it can still occur post-operatively during the healing period. Antibiotics can reduce the chance of infection and treat it should it occur.
- As with any surgery, it is possible that a "cure" may not occur and additional medical and/or surgical treatment may be required. Reasons for additional surgery include abnormal scar formation with sinus obstruction and/or recurrent development of sinus disease or disease which persists from the original surgery.
- The tear duct lies very close to the ethmoid sinus and is covered by bone. In some patients, the tear duct actually runs through the sinus and is covered only by a thin bone or no bone at all. For this reason, it is at risk of being injured during the surgery. Permanent complications, such as persistent tearing that would require a second surgery are rare and occur in less than 1% of patients.
- Surgery of the sinuses, especially the ethmoid sinuses, carries with it a small risk of a spinal fluid leak. The top of the ethmoid sinus lies just under the brain and only a thin bone separates the two. During surgery, especially if there is excessive bleeding, scar tissue, or significant inflammatory disease, this bone can be violated. If this occurs, the fluid that surrounds and cushions the brain can leak into the nose. This is very rare, however if this occurs and is recognized during surgery and the area is patched with tissue to stop the leak. Rarely this is noted by the patient following surgery as a clear fluid dripping from one nostril. Should this complication occur, a pathway exists for the infection in the sinuses to travel into the brain and cause meningitis.
- Visual loss can occur with sinus surgery. Only a paper-thin bone separates the sinuses from the eyes. If this bone is violated during surgery, damage can occur to the eye. Temporary or permanent visual loss and double vision have all been described following sinus surgery. Sinus surgery may alter your sense of smell, and consequently, your appreciation of tastes. This is usually temporary due to postoperative swelling and nasal crusting and improves with healing. Rarely there may be severe loss that does not return.
- Other potential risks include swelling, bruising, and temporary numbness of the front teeth, lip, eye, or cheek.

Follow up Care

The actual surgical procedure is only part of the care. In order to obtain optimal results it is very important to continue intermittent follow-up visits in the clinic. This allows the doctor to remove accumulated debris and keep scarring to a minimum. You will also be asked to use nasal irrigations several times a day. This not only speeds the healing process, but it makes your follow-up cleanings more comfortable. Using the nasal irrigations to clear secretions may also improve nasal breathing.

The success of your surgery is greatly dependent upon your compliance with the follow-up visits and consistent nasal irrigations.

Postoperative Activity

- Sleep with your head elevated. Using 4-inch wood blocks under the posts of the headboard or sleeping with 2-3 pillows can achieve this. It is best to sleep sitting as upright as possible to help decrease swelling or pain and lessen the risk of bleeding.
- Limit bending, lifting, or straining for at least one week after surgery. These activities will promote bleeding from your nose. You should not plan to participate in any rigorous activity until healing is completed. Walking is allowed but do not over do it.
- Do not suppress the need to cough or sneeze, but do so with your mouth open. Do not blow your nose until you have been given permission to do so (usually one week after surgery).
- Do not travel until given permission.

Postoperative diet

You may resume your regular diet upon discharge from the hospital. Fluids are very important to maintain your hydration level and to ensure rapid healing without complications.

Bleeding/Drainage

You can expect some bleeding from your nose for several days following surgery and then again after each office debridement for the first several weeks. Should a nosebleed occur, sit comfortably in a chair, breathe through your nose, and try to relax. The bleeding should subside in a few minutes. If mild bleeding persists for more than 15-20 minutes, recurs several times, or if moderate to severe bleeding occurs, please proceed to nearest emergency room for treatment as soon as possible.

Please Notify Your Doctor if You Experience Any of the Following:

- Diarrhea from antibiotics
- Fever over 101
- Pain not managed by your pain medications
- Increased swelling in the nose or thick odorous discharge
- Persistent bleeding
- Changes in vision, eye twitching, wandering eye, or double vision
- A clear fluid drip from one nostril
- Severe persistent headache or neck stiffness
- Excessive tiredness
- Change in mental status

Medications

If you were using a nasal steroid spray, the doctor will discuss when to restart it following surgery. Nasal irrigations will be prescribed following your sinus surgery. Irrigate three times per day initially. This will soften the crusts and scabs and allow the surgeon to remove them with less discomfort to you.

Post-operative appointments

You will have several follow up appointments at weekly or semiweekly intervals. During these appointments, extensive sinus cleaning is done. It is recommended that you take your pain medications to make the procedure more tolerable.