

Functional Endoscopic Sinus Surgery

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Special interest – nasal and sinus disorders

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What is Functional Endoscopic Sinus Surgery?

- Functional Endoscopic Sinus Surgery (FESS) is surgery performed on the sinuses using an endoscope.
- The aim of surgery is to remove diseased tissue and to open the natural drainage pathways.
- Functioning normal structures are retained where possible.

When is sinus surgery recommended?

- Sinus surgery is recommended when patients fail medical treatment.
- This medical treatment may include nasal sprays and antibiotics.
- A CT scan of the sinuses is required to guide the extent of surgery.

Is sinus surgery painful?

- Sinus surgery is usually not painful. Some discomfort can be expected.
- Typically dissolving sponges are placed in the nose at the end of surgery to prevent bleeding. These are gently washed away after surgery using the nasal rinse bottle provided. Traditionally nasal gauze was placed in the nose and removed the next day. It was the removal of this gauze that was uncomfortable (this gauze is now rarely needed).

How do I prepare for surgery?

- On the day of your operation you must bring your X-rays / CT scans with you to the hospital. If we do not have the X-ray / CT scans on the day of your operation unfortunately your surgery will be postponed.

- Avoid blood thinning tablets (e.g. Aspirin, Nurofen, Warfarin) ten days before surgery. Coordinate this with your local doctor. If you smoke, make every effort to stop.
- If you have nasal polyps, a short course of prednisolone is sometimes used to help reduce any inflammation. Rarely, prednisolone can have side effects.

What happens after surgery?

- Most patients can go home the same day of surgery. If so, you must have someone drive you home and you can't be on your own for the first night after surgery.
- Initially, expect some minor blood-stained nasal discharge. Avoid bending, lifting, straining or any other strenuous activity (these increase the risk of bleeding).
- Generally you will be asked to take a course of antibiotics after surgery. Commence these the day after surgery. Also commence your salt water washes / nasal rinse bottle the day after surgery. Take pain medication (also prescribed) as needed.
- A post-operative visit is needed to clean the inside of your nose. This is usually the week after surgery.
- Ongoing medical treatment (nasal sprays) may still be needed for managing the medical component of your disease, especially if you have allergies and/or polyps.

What are the risks of surgery?

Bleeding

- The risk of bleeding is small. Some blood-stained nasal discharge is normal after surgery. If bleeding occurs after surgery, nasal packing and readmission to hospital may be required.

Infection

- Antibiotics are usually given to help reduce this small risk.

Nasal adhesions

- Scar bands can form inside the nose after surgery due to exposed raw surfaces. The nasal rinse bottle / salt water washes are effective ways for preventing the formation of adhesions.

Cerebrospinal fluid leakage

- Very rarely there may be leakage of brain fluid (cerebrospinal fluid). If this rare event happens it is usually repaired at the time of surgery.

Eye/tear duct injury

- Very rarely there may be damage to the eye. The risk of serious damage (loss of vision, double vision) to one or both eyes is very small indeed. A watery eye may also rarely occur. Bruising / swelling around the eyes is not to be expected.

Smell abnormalities

- Rarely the sense of smell may be reduced or lost after surgery. In some patients the sense of smell may improve with surgery.

Septoplasty / Turbinectomy

- Straightening of a deviated nasal septum (a septoplasty) may be required in conjunction with your sinus surgery.
- Small risks include a hole in the septum (rarely this may result in whistling or crusting) or persistence of the deviation or pain/numbness along the roof of mouth/front teeth.
- Rarely a blood clot or infection may occur in the septum. A very rare risk is a change in the shape of the nose.
- If a turbinectomy is performed, atrophic rhinitis (empty nose syndrome) is another rare risk. The use of endoscopes reduces this risk.

Revision Surgery

- Sometimes further sinus surgery is required at a later date. This is particularly so for people with nasal polyps.

Other

- A general anaesthetic may be associated with some small risk. This may include allergic reactions and the effects of extra stress placed upon the body. For further aspects regarding your anaesthetic please ask to speak to your anaesthetist prior to surgery.

Please feel free to further discuss any aspects of your surgery.