

What to expect after Rhinoplasty or Septorhinoplasty.

The following information is designed to help you understand what to expect after your Rhinoplasty or Septorhinoplasty. This information supplements the “*Instructions Before Surgery*” and “*General Instructions for Postoperative Patients*” forms.

Typical postoperative course (what to expect):

- **Pain.** Pain is highly variable patient to patient, but generally the first 5-7 days after nasal surgery have a fair amount of pain. Most patients use narcotics frequently during this time period, but by the end of the first week, most patients are taking just Tylenol™.
- **Bruising.** Most patients do get bruising in a “black eye” pattern, but the amount of bruising is highly variable between patients. Any bruise, surgical or otherwise, will take 2-3 weeks to change color and resolve. As the bruises change color, they may initially become darker before fading. Bruising may also migrate down the cheeks with gravity and into the jaw-line.
- **Swelling.** The nose, eyelids, cheeks, and jaw-line may all swelling. Again, this varies patient to patient. In some patients the upper eyelids will swell, peaking typically two days after surgery; this can almost close the eyes, although the swelling is soft. Swelling is much improved by 2-3 weeks postoperatively but will generally require 3-4 months for the majority of the swelling to resolve, but swelling of the nasal tip will take approximately a year and a half to resolve completely.
- **Bleeding.** Dr. Goldman does not use packing after septoplasty or septorhinoplasty. He uses silicone plastic splints, which are smooth and flexible, and much more comfortable than packing. Some bleeding will typically occur around the splints. A drip-pad is used after surgery. Right after surgery, the drip pad is changed typically every hour or so. This decreases such that the drip pad is discontinued between 1 and 5 days after surgery. If you are worried about the amount of bleeding, do not hesitate to call our office at (216) 514-8899.
- **Nasal congestion.** Nasal splints will be used internally and externally for 5-7 days after surgery. During this time, the nose will feel blocked. Patients may experience facial pressure and sinus pressure. The splints will allow for limited air flow.
- **End result.** As described above, it will take about a year and a half for residual swelling, especially in the nasal tip, to resolve. The last changes are subtle, so the nose looks “normal” long before the actual end result is achieved.
- **Down-time.** Most patients return to work in a week, after the splints are removed, but at one week there will still be noticeable swelling and bruising. “Social down-time” refers to the amount of time until a patient’s recent surgery is not detectable to others. Most rhinoplasty patients will go out in public even before their splints are removed, but generally the surgery is noticeable for about 3 weeks after surgery to co-workers and friends, although the amount of time varies by patient and observer.
- **Stitches.** Dr. Goldman uses absorbable stitches that do not require removal except for one stitch holding the splints in place.

Instructions and precautions after surgery:

- **Take no aspirin or NSAIDs** (like Motrin or Alleve) for two weeks postoperatively. Also avoid Vitamin E, fish oil, and take no homeopathic remedies unless cleared by our office.
- **No bending, heavy lifting, or straining** for two weeks. Light activity is desirable.
- **No nose-blowing.** You may gently sniff inward.
- **Sneeze with your mouth open.**
- **Watch for excess swelling, bruising, pain, or bleeding.** Call Dr. Goldman if you are concerned that bleeding, swelling, or pain is excessive. There are no specific criteria, and such changes vary greatly between patients, so use common sense and call if you are worried. As described above, the upper lids often swell two days after surgery. Call if there is anything unusual like eye pain, change in vision, or severe head ache.
- **Antibiotic ointment.** Apply twice a day to the incisions on the outside and inside of the nose. Also apply antibiotic ointment to the nostrils; this will help minimize crusting of blood.
- **A bed-side humidifier.** A cold air (not warm) humidifier can be used to decrease nasal crusting and dry throat. This is generally very beneficial.
- **Sleeping upright** on extra pillows may reduce swelling. Sleeping in a recliner is not necessary, although some patients prefer it.
- **Cold compress.** A cold compress may reduce swelling and bruising. It can be used 10-15 minutes on then 10-15 off for the first 6-8 hours after surgery, after which it can be used for comfort but is not likely to further reduce pain and swelling. The overall benefit to a cold compresses is limited, so its use is not required if you find it inconvenient.
- **Follow-up visits.** The first visit is typically 5-7 days postoperatively with our surgical RN to remove the splints and check early healing. A second visit with Dr. Goldman will be 2-3 weeks after surgery. Subsequent follow up visits are generally at time points of 2-3 months, 6-9 months, and 12-18 months after surgery to follow healing and for photographs.
- **Prescriptions.** You will be given a pain prescription the day of surgery. The person that accompanies you may want to pick them up while you are in surgery. They may also want to pick up MiraLAX and Bacitracin ointment while they are at the pharmacy. You will be instructed on their use after your surgery.
- Please also review our *General Instruction for Postoperative Patients* instruction sheet.

**If you have any questions before or after surgery please contact our office at
216-514-8899**