



# Central West Specialists

## Ear, Nose & Throat Specialist

### **NASAL SEPTAL SURGERY & REDUCTION OF TURBINATES**

The septum divides the nose in two and is made up of cartilage and bone. Sometimes it can be very bent to one side or the other and obstruct the nasal airway. If this is causing discomfort it can be corrected surgically. The turbinates sit on the lateral wall of the nose on either side. The job of the turbinates is to warm and humidify the air we breathe. If they become very enlarged they can also obstruct the breathing and can be reduced surgically. This is sometimes necessary at the same time as a Septoplasty Operation. It can also sometimes be done alone to reverse the nasal obstruction.

#### **POSSIBLE PROBLEMS:**

##### **SEPTOPLASTY:**

Care must be taken in this operation to leave as much cartilage as possible as the cartilage supports the external structure of the nose. Very rarely the cartilage may move back into the area of obstruction after the operation. A revision Septoplasty may then be required this is very uncommon, probably in the order of 2-5%.

**BLEEDING** - Bleeding can occur after any nasal operation, as there is a very large blood supply to this area. Aspirin should be avoided after this or any operation as it can make one bleed more easily. Sometimes some packing will be required after the operation and this will be removed the next day. Bleeding is not a great problem after Septoplasty and that usually only one night in hospital is required. However, it can be severe and it is certainly reported.

**INFECTION** – Because of the large blood supply the nose rarely gets infected. However, if it does certainly some antibiotics will be needed to counter this. The infection rate is however very low and it is very rarely a problem.

**SEPTAL PERFORATION** – This rarely occurs after surgery because the lining from one side of the nose grows through a small defect joined up the other side. These defects are usually identified at surgery and repaired at the time.

##### **REDUCTION OF TURBINATES:**

These structures have a very large blood supply. They are usually reduced in size because they have become so large that they are blocking the airway. The main risk of this procedure is bleeding. This can usually be controlled with a nasal pack and the risk of serious bleeding again is very low. However, it is reported and it is mentioned here for completeness. Following a nasal operation there is usually quite a lot of nasal obstruction and out pouring of mucus. This

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will continue for 2-3 weeks. Nasal septoplasty is not usually particularly painful and any discomfort can be easily controlled after the operation has been done. It is advisable to take 2 weeks from your normal activity after such an operation.

### **AFTER THE OPERATION**

**PAIN** - The nose will be very sore for two or three days but this gradually subsides. It is important not to take Aspirin or similar medication after the operation as it can make you bleed. Some Panadol or Panadeine is usually adequate. The tip of the nose will be tender to touch for up to one month.

**PACK** - The pack will be in your nose when you wake up which will completely block your nose. This will be removed by myself or a member of the nursing staff the following morning. It is common for a small amount of bleeding to be present then but within a few hours you should be able to go home.

**BLEEDING** - The nose has a big blood supply, so therefore can bleed in the healing phase. As mentioned above it is important not to take Aspirin. It is also worthwhile avoiding very hot drinks or long hot showers.

**BLOCKAGE** - The nose will swell after the operation in the healing phase. This will cause the nose to block but the blockage is only temporary but will resolve once the swelling goes away.

**REST** - It is important to rest after the operation for at least one and usually two weeks. During this time no strenuous activity should be carried out. You can blow your nose gently from the second day after the operation. Some crust in your nose is normal and this will come away in time. It may be helped by using some saltwater nasal spray (Narium) or some steam in the shower. There will be some sutures in your nose too. These are dissolving and will come out during the first week after the operation. They are nothing to worry about.

A Post Operative visit is usually arranged at six weeks to two months to make sure that the septum is sitting appropriately and that the nose is healed up.

If you have any problems in the post operative period please contact me through my rooms, or after hours I can be contacted through the Orange Base Hospital.