

Having septal surgery on your nose

Ear, Nose and Throat Department

Produced: May 2019

Review: May 2022

Information for Patients

Leaflet number: 398 Version: 2

What is septal surgery?

The septum is a thin piece of cartilage and bone sitting between the right and left side of the nose. In some people this septum is bent into one or both sides of the nose causing a blocked nose. This may be due to an injury to the nose, but sometimes it is just the way the cartilage has grown. Septal surgery is used to straighten it.

Why have I been offered surgery?

You may have been offered surgery to the bend if there is significant blockage that bothers you. Sometimes it is done to create space to give us room to do other things such as sinus surgery. The operation is not meant to change the way your nose looks.

Is there any alternative?

An operation is the only definite way to correct a bent septum. Nose spray or drops can help to treat any swelling in the nose that causes it to feel blocked. Septal surgery is not usually offered to children as the nose is still growing.

How is the operation done?

You will have a general anaesthetic, so will be asleep. It takes 30-45 minutes. A cut is made inside the nose without any scars or bruises on the face. We straighten out the septum by taking away some of the cartilage and bone and close the cut with dissolvable stitches.

Does it hurt?

Not really, but sometimes the front of your nose can be a bit tender for few weeks. You may get some blood-stained watery fluid from your nose for 1-2 weeks which is normal.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

Packs and splints

We may need to put a dressing in each side of your nose to keep things in place and prevent bleeding. The dressings are called 'packs', and they will block your nose for a short period, so you will have to breathe through your mouth. The packs are usually dissolvable but sometimes they are not, and we will take them out the morning after your operation. There may be some discomfort when we take them out.

After the operation

Do not blow your nose for about a week, or it might start bleeding. If you are going to sneeze, sneeze with your mouth open to protect your nose.

Your nose will be stuffy and blocked for 10-14 days. We may give you some drops or spray to help this. It may take up to three months for your nose to settle down and for your breathing to be clear again. Try to stay away from dusty or smoky places. There will be some stitches inside your nose - those will dissolve and fall out by themselves.

How long will I be off work?

- You can expect to go home the same day of your operation. The surgeon will tell you if you need to stay overnight in the hospital.
- You will need to rest at home for at least a week. During that time, you can go for a walk for 20-30 minutes to avoid muscle and joint stiffness.
- You can start gentle exercise in the second week.
- You are fit to drive one day after the operation.
- If you do heavy lifting and carrying at work, you should take two weeks off.
- You should not play football or other contact sports for about six weeks.
- Ask your nurse if you need a fit note.

Can there be problems?

Septal surgery is very safe, but every operation has a small risk.

- Sometimes your nose can bleed after this operation, and we may have to put packs into your nose to stop it. Rarely, you may need to return to the theatre under general anaesthesia to stop bleeding.
- Infection in your nose after this operation can be serious, so **you should see a doctor if your nose is becoming more sore and blocked.**
- Scar tissue can form inside your nose, but this often doesn't cause any problems.
- The operation may rarely leave you with a hole going from one side of your nose to the other. This can cause a whistling noise when you breathe or crusting and nose bleeds. Most of the time it causes no problems at all and needs no treatment.

- Rarely after many months or years, the shape of your nose may change slightly with a dip in the bridge of your nose. Most people don't notice any change, but if you are not happy with it, it can usually be corrected with another operation.
- Very rarely, you can have some numbness of your teeth which often settle in few months.

If you have any questions, please talk to us at your pre-assessment appointment or on the day of surgery itself.

If you need further information, you can email the ENT sister: maria.pereira@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

Leaflet authors: B Mettias and Mr F J Uddin

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل
જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો
ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk