

SAN FRANCISCO OTOLARYNGOLOGY

Providing ear, nose, and throat care since 1940

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER RHINOPLASTY:

There will be a mild to moderate amount of pain and discomfort associated with the surgery. This should be easily controlled with oral medications. Tylenol with codeine (or equivalent if allergy to codeine exists) is generally always sufficient for pain control.

The discomfort and pain should begin to decrease within 72 hours after surgery and a significant increase in pain after this period should prompt you to call the office.

Bruising and swelling are not unusual after the surgery. These symptoms often worsen on the second day following surgery, and then steadily improve thereafter; this is normal. The amount of bruising that occurs varies significantly from one person to the next. Most swelling occurs around the eyes, but some bruising may track down and discolor the cheek area. If only the septum and/or nasal tip are operated on, only slight, if any, bruising will normally be expected to occur.

Some bloody nasal discharge is to be expected after any nasal surgery. A small "mustache" type gauze dressing will be placed beneath your nose after your surgery. During the first 24-48 hours, this absorbent dressing often needs to be changed 10-20 times; this is to be expected.

Often at the completion of the surgery, a light tape and plastic nasal dressing is placed on the outside of the nose, and plastic splints are placed on the inside of the nose. If only a septoplasty and/or nasal tip surgery have been performed, the external dressing may be omitted. Both the internal and external nasal dressings are removed in 5-7 days after surgery.

Nasal stuffiness is the most annoying problem that you will face after surgery. It is most distressful in the first week after surgery, and significantly improves once the internal nasal splints are removed. Any residual stuffiness can be expected to gradually improve over a period of several weeks thereafter.

Excess mucus is often present in the throat after surgery. It is due to the splints inside the nose stimulating the nose to temporarily produce more mucus than is normal. This will resolve once the splints are removed (7 to 14 days after surgery).

Numbness in the tip of the nose, upper front teeth or roof of the mouth following surgery is to be expected because nasal surgery typically causes a temporary disruption of some of the nerves in the area. Sensation will generally return slowly over a period of several weeks, and rarely, months.

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Some temporary decrease or alteration in the sense of smell or taste is typical after surgery. This is, again, secondary to disruption of some nerves in the nose during surgery. These changes will begin to improve within the first 1 to 2 weeks after the procedure.

It is very important for you be aware of the fact that swelling from the surgery will temporarily make the nose appear broader and the tip more turned up and less refined than is desirable. You will often notice that the swelling on the bridge of your nose will improve more quickly than the swelling on the tip of your nose. This should not be a cause for alarm. All the swelling in your nose will greatly improve in the first few weeks after the surgery. Although much of the swelling will have resolved within a few months, your nose will continue to improve for up to one year after surgery. Patients who have undergone only septal surgery do not normally have any significant swelling on the outside of the nose.