Endoscopic Sinus Surgery
Your Care at Home

What is endoscopic sinus surgery?
Your doctor will use a tool called an **Endoscope** to look into your sinuses through your nose. Your doctor will remove tissue that is blocking your sinuses. This should improve the way your sinuses drain.

What to Expect after Surgery

**Sinus Drainage**
After surgery you can expect drainage from your nose that will be bright red in color. It will decrease in amount and turn darker in color over the next few days. A small amount of blood-tinged drainage may be present for about 10 to 14 days.

You will be sent home with a gauze pad under your nose. Change the pad under your nose as it becomes soiled. Pads will be sent home with you.

**Packing**
During surgery your doctor may put packing in your nose to prevent bleeding and scarring.

Some packing will be removed at your first visit. You may take pain medicine 30 minutes before your first clinic visit, but **only if someone is able to drive you.** This may make the packing removal more comfortable.

Other packing will dissolve on its own. Your doctor will tell you about using either a nasal saline mist spray or saline irrigations to help the packing dissolve. Your doctor will tell you which you should use. The mist sprays (Ocean, Ayr, and Simple Saline) and sinus irrigation systems can be purchased over-the-counter at any pharmacy.

**Sinus Rinses**
After your packing is removed or after your first follow up visit, you will be asked to start saline nasal rinses with either a nasal squeeze bottle or Neti pot system. You may notice large crusts or scabs coming from the nose when you first start using the nasal saline rinses. This is normal. This is critical for success after sinus surgery!

**Nasal Congestion**
Expect your nose to be stuffy. This is caused by swelling that will decrease over the next 2-3 weeks. The stuffy feeling may last a few months as your sinuses fully heal.

- Sleep with your head raised for at least the first week after surgery (so your head is raised about 30º). This will help decrease the stuffy feeling and pressure in your nose.
- You will breathe through your mouth until the packing is out and the swelling is less. This may cause some dryness and soreness of your mouth and throat. Using a humidifier or vaporizer along with good oral care may provide comfort.
- **Do not blow your nose for 1 week after surgery or until your packing has been removed.** This is to help prevent bleeding. Once you begin your sinus rinses, you will be allowed to gently blow your nose.
- Sneeze with your mouth open.

Do not hold back a sneeze.
• Do not smoke. Avoid second-hand smoke and other fumes that can irritate the nose.
• Ask your doctor when you should restart your steroid nasal spray if you use one.

Pain
You should expect some nasal, sinus pressure and pain for the first few days after surgery. This may feel like a sinus infection or a dull ache in your sinuses. Extra-strength Tylenol is often all that is needed for this mild discomfort. You should avoid aspirin and NSAIDs such as Motrin, Advil, and Aleve for the first week after surgery. If Tylenol is not sufficient to control the pain, you should use the pain medicine prescribed by your doctor.

Use caution when taking narcotic pain pills.
• Do not drive a car as the pills may cause you to feel drowsy.
• Do not drink alcohol when taking the pain pills.

Cold packs to your nose and sinus areas may help to give you more comfort. Apply 20 minutes at a time several times a day. Frozen peas or corn in a Ziploc bag wrapped in a towel works well for this area. Do not apply cold directly to your skin.

Activity
For one week only, do light activity. No aerobics, jogging, exercising, swimming, or contact sports.

or two weeks, avoid bending over and lifting any objects over 25 pounds.

Do not travel by airplane for 3-4 weeks after surgery to avoid pressure changes and the drying effects of airplane air.

Avoid alcohol, coffee, and other drinks that dehydrate.

When to Call Your Doctor or Clinic Nurse
If you have any of the following, please call your doctor or the clinic nurse:
• Sudden vision changes (loss of vision, double vision, or eye pain)
• Severe headache with neck stiffness and high fever
• Bleeding from the nose that is soaking through 5-6 gauze pads in less than 1 hour.
• Fever of 100.5°F or higher
• Pain not relieved by medicine and rest.

Telephone Numbers
If you have questions or concerns call the Otolaryngology (ENT) - Head and Neck Surgery Clinic at (608) 263-6190 or 1-800-323-8942 Monday - Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

After 5:00 p.m. or on the weekends, the clinic number will be answered by the paging operator. Ask for the Otolaryngology (ENT) doctor on call. Leave your name and phone number with the area code. The doctor will return your call.

The Spanish version of this HFFY is #6393.