

Rhinoplasty: Questions & Answers

1. If Dr. Karam didn't pack my nose, why am I stuffed up?

It is very common to be "stuffed up" after surgery. The reason is that there is swelling inside the nose, as well as outside the nose. This swelling will peak on the third day, and then go down slowly thereafter. Expect to breathe mainly through your mouth the first week following the procedure.

2. How long will my nose stay swollen?

Because the nose is not very vascular, swelling of the nose can last several months and even up to a year. In most cases the swelling is not distracting or obvious.

3. When will my external sutures and my external nasal splint be removed?

Your sutures and nasal splint will be removed at your one-week post-op appointment. Some dissolvable internal sutures will remain in place for six months.

4. Are there sutures inside my nose?

There are dissolvable sutures in your nose that remain for about 3-5 months. These sutures are used to support the nose during healing and to close the incisions.

5. Can I remove the tape from my nose?

The tape and splint must remain on your nose for the entire week until we take it off at your scheduled 1 week post-op appointment. They both help support the healing process and help with your swelling so you can have a speedy recovery.

6. Can I clean my nose?

After 48 hours you should start using a Q-tip soaked with hydrogen peroxide to gently wash the scabs and any dried blood outside the nose. You may also clean inside the rim of the nose. Saline spray is great for cleansing deeper inside the nose as well. This can be started after the nose has stopped draining.

7. Why do I have draining down the back of my throat?

Normally the nose secretes about 8oz. of mucus, which goes down the back of your throat, without you knowing it. However, after you have surgery the nose is stuffed up and you become more aware of this normal secretion.

8. Why do I have the most drainage from my nostrils the first day after surgery? Can I take any antihistamines/allergy medicine to help/stop it?

The nose drains blood for about 24-48 hours after surgery until a scab forms. The combination of "normal mucus drainage" and "intranasal swelling" can cause the drainage to come out the nostrils rather than to go down the back of throat. Yes, you can take an over the counter oral antihistamine, such as Benadryl, but not necessary.

9. Is bruising normal?

Bruising after a rhinoplasty is normal, although only about 5% of Dr. Karam's patients have any noticeable signs of bruising after the first week.

10. I have a headache and trouble sleeping. Is this normal? Can I take anything for it?

Unfortunately, headaches are common due to the swelling of the nose and for some patients, sleeping on their backs is the cause of sleepless nights. It is often a good idea to try something like extra strength Tylenol for your headache and save the Hydrocodone for pain. After the night of surgery, you may take a light sleeping aid, such as Tylenol PM, if needed.

11. My teeth are sensitive, is that normal?

Teeth, gums, and/or upper lip sensitivity is normal after a rhinoplasty. Some patients may experience this for a few days to several weeks.

Rhinoplasty: Questions & Answers

12. When can I resume:

- A. **Exercise-** You can begin doing long walks by three to four days after surgery. You can go to the gym and use the treadmill or stationary bike (no spin class) by the second postoperative week. You can begin to do light weights and non-head-down exercises by the third week (avoid heavy weights that would raise your blood pressure). By the fourth week you can try and resume your pre-operative exercise routine, but stop if you have pain or discomfort.
- B. **Swimming-** You can resume swimming after one month.
- C. **Taking my vitamins and/ or regular medications-** You can resume all your medications and vitamins after two weeks from surgery.
- D. **Wearing glasses/sunglasses-** Only those patients who have their nose broken during surgery need to worry about glasses and sunglasses sitting on the bridge of their nose. This is only relevant for the first four weeks.

13. How long do I have to sleep elevated and on my back?

It's best to remain on your back and elevated for the first two weeks, because some swelling will naturally follow gravity. Keeping your head up is very beneficial. Those who sleep on their sides will definitely notice swelling on one side more than the other.

14. Can I blow my nose or sneeze after surgery?

You can blow your nose and sneeze normally at about 6 weeks. However, if a sneeze is unavoidable just make sure to sneeze with your mouth open to avoid pressure within the nose.

15. Why is there so much numbness at the tip of my nose?

Numbness is very common and will last from a few weeks to a few months.

16. What medications/supplements should I avoid 2 weeks before and two weeks after surgery?

You should avoid all NSAIDs, such as Advil, Motrin, aspirin, Excedrin, ibuprofen, Aleve, Naprosyn, etc. Additionally, you should avoid omega-3 supplements, such as fish oils, chia seeds and flaxseed for two weeks before and two weeks after surgery. If you have any questions in regards to your medications please call the office before taking them.

17. How long before the swelling has totally resolved?

It generally takes two to three weeks for most of the swelling to subside. At two to three weeks it is difficult for most people to be able to tell if you have had surgery.

18. What are the changes I should expect while my nose is healing?

Your nose will continue to get smaller and more refined as the months go on. Your body heals at its own rate and it is important to be patient during this time.

19. Regarding donor sites for ear cartilage grafts or fascia grafts from the scalp.

- A. **Why is there bleeding and oozing?** These areas are highly vascularized, and once the epinephrine wears off from the local anesthesia, you may have "reflex bleeding or oozing". The bleeding and oozing are both normal.
- B. **How do I clean the area?** You can wash your hair and get the area of the scalp wet where the fascia graft was harvested. However, do not get the yellow ear donor site or the nose cast wet. It is best to have someone else wash your hair for you.
- C. **When can I wash my hair?** It is usually best to wait 48 hours after surgery to wash your hair and it is often beneficial to have someone wash your hair for you.