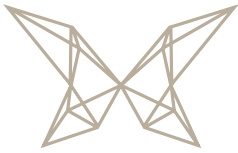


Postoperative Instructions

RHINOPLASTY

Dr Rory Dower



Postoperative Instructions

RHINOPLASTY

You have undergone a surgical procedure in a day clinic setting and will spend some time in recovery, before being discharged home. If this procedure is combined with other procedures, you may require an overnight stay. It is important for you to arrange to have either a friend or family member drive you home and stay with you for the first 24 - 48 hours.

What to Expect

- It is normal to have some blood-colored, watery fluid or mucus drain from your nose for approximately 2 weeks
- It is normal for the nose to be very blocked and congested after surgery as a result of the swelling and accumulation of blood and mucus within the nose. You should try to stay away from dusty or smoky places during this time.
- Your nose and eyes will be swollen and bruised postoperatively, this will peak at 2-3 days. The bruising will usually settle in 1-2 weeks. Most of the swelling is gone at around 6 weeks, but there may be some residual swelling at the top of the nose for 3-6 months and at the tip for up to 6-9 months.
- Some areas will look asymmetrical initially because of swelling, but this will settle with time
- Your nose will be puffy and wooden to touch at first. This is normal and not cause for concern
- You may experience some numbness of the nose especially the tip. This will settle with time. Be careful of injuring or burning the nose during this time.
- You may not blow your nose until 1 week after the splint is removed. Before that, please only wipe your nose
- If you feel you need to sneeze, do this with your mouth open so that you do not sneeze through your nose

Medication and Handling pain

- Following surgery, cold cooling pads are applied to reduce swelling and discomfort for the first couple of hours
- Once you are at home, rest quietly and apply cold compresses to the eyes for 15-20 minutes of every hour that you are awake for the first 3 days after surgery. This is easily done by taking eye pads and moistening them, before putting them in the refrigerator. Once cold, they are then applied over the eyelids
- Please DO NOT apply ice directly to the skin, as this may cause a burn, especially where you have decreased sensation
- If you have been prescribed antibiotics it is important to complete the course
- Decongestant nose drops and/or anti-inflammatory steroid nose drops will be prescribed and you should use these drops as instructed
- You may recommence your normal medication the day after surgery unless otherwise advised
- Take pain medication as prescribed.
- In order to "break" the pain cycle, we recommend taking the pain meds regularly, as prescribed, for the first 3 days, even if discomfort is only mild
- Do not take aspirin or any products containing aspirin for the week following surgery, unless this is for a medical condition, in which case please discuss this with Dr Dower
- Do not drink alcohol when taking pain medication

Wound Care, Stitches, Dressings And Drains

- Keeping the wounds clean (this can be done once to twice daily):
 - Dip an earbud into hydrogen peroxide and use this to gently clean around the inside of the nostrils, removing crusts and dried blood.
 - Apply antibiotic ointment to the inside of the nostrils and the skin between the nostrils where the incision is - this is to prevent infection and stops the nose from becoming crusty

NEVER use Hydrogen Peroxide around eyes

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- The stitches under the tip of your nose will be removed at 1 week. The rest of the stitches are dissolvable and will go away on their own
- You will have a plaster cast over the top of your nose. Please do not touch this as it helps to keep the nose structure straight
- The cast must remain on your nose until it is removed at your 2-week follow-up appointment.
- You may have it exchanged for a new cast at your 1 week follow up and in rare occasions it may need to stay on for 3 weeks
- You will be given tape to apply to the nose for a further week once the splint comes off
- If you have a bolster dressing over your ear, this will be removed at 2 weeks

Contact lenses and Glasses

- If you have had osteotomies and grafts, then as a rule of thumb, you should avoid wearing glasses for at least a month, but ideally 3 months, after surgery

Showering and Bathing

- You may shower or bath after 48 hours, but you must be careful to keep the plaster dry until it is removed. Washing your hair with your head back 'salon style' will help to avoid this
- Steam and moisture are good for the nose

Sun Protection

- Your nose will be numb for three to six months, and you will be at risk of sun burn due to the lack of sensation
- For the first 3 months, wear a hat and use a moisturizer with an SPF of 30-50 daily
- Continue to use daily SPF 30-50 cream for at least a year after surgery

Sleeping

- Use an extra pillow when sleeping, to keep the head elevated and reduce the swelling

Level of Activity, Exercise and Driving

- Start walking as soon as possible after surgery to reduce the risk of blood clots in your lower legs
- Although you can gently walk about and do light duties for the first 7-10 days, please avoid activities that increase blood flow to your head. This includes straining, bending over or lifting heavy objects. To pick something up from the floor, lower yourself down by bending your knees rather than leaning forward
- You may choose to return to work after 7-14 days
- You may resume light exercises at around 3 weeks and your normal exercise routine at around 4 weeks
- You can do sports again no earlier than 6-8 weeks after the operation
- Resume sexual activity as comfort permits, usually 2-3 weeks post-operatively
- Do not drive until you are no longer taking narcotic pain medication
- If you are doing something that is causing you pain, this is usually the body's natural warning system to take it easy and not over exert yourself

Smoking and Alcohol

- Avoid smoking for the first 4 weeks after surgery as smoking delays healing and increases the risk of complications
- Avoid alcohol for at least 72 hours after surgery, as this may increase your risk of bleeding

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Diet

- Everyone recovers from their anesthetic differently. Some people feel no side effects while others are more noticeably affected, feeling tired and even sick for the first couple of days
- Eat lightly with small meals throughout the day to minimize sickness
- Drink plenty of fluids in the form of water and fresh juices, in the first few days after surgery
- Avoid caffeine and carbonated drinks for the first few days

What to Wear

- It is best to wear comfortable, loose, front opening clothing that does not need to be pulled over your head for the first few weeks

Scar Management

- A scar takes 9-12 months to reach full maturity at which stage the final result will be evident.
- The scars may become a little more pink and noticeable, even red and lumpy temporarily before they start to improve.
- Avoid exposing scars to sun for at least 12 months. Always use a strong sunblock, if sun exposure is unavoidable (SPF 50 or greater)
- Scar science can be used to improve the appearance of the scar. You can start applying this from 6 weeks post-operatively. For the first 2-6 weeks of treatment, the cream should be applied over the Micropore tape. After this, it can be applied directly to the scar. For the scar science to have a beneficial effect, it should be used for a period of at least 6 months from the date of surgery. After 1 year the scar has reached maturity and there is no further benefit
- If not using scar science, you can apply Micropore tape to the incisions for 6 months, changing this every 7 to 10 days. Do not remove the tape every day as it will cause irritation of the surrounding skin. Incision areas may be massaged over the Micropore tape to help improve the scar
- Local massage to the scar is usually begun at around 4 weeks. Use your normal body lotion creams or Bio-Oil to facilitate this action
- Do not use any creams containing Vitamin E to treat the incision areas for the first 3 months

When should I call?

- Fresh bleeding, other than that of a minor nature
- Pain not relieved by pain relieving tablets
- Sudden onset new and worsening pain
- Excessive swelling or redness
- Increased redness along the incision sites
- Discharge or foul odour from the incision sites
- Fever of 38 degrees Celsius or above
- Any side effects to medications; such as, rash, nausea, headache or vomiting
- Increased pain in your calves, shortness of breath, or chest pain

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBER: +27 (0)82 876 1097