

ENDOSCOPIC SINUS SURGERY

What are the benefits of endoscopic sinus surgery?

Chronic sinus problems are very common. Medications are adequate to treat allergy and sinus problems in many people. Some people, however, continue to have significant sinus problems even on medications. In this situation, endoscopic sinus surgery can often bring considerable relief.

How is endoscopic sinus surgery performed?

The surgery is performed under general anesthesia in the operating room. A preoperative assessment will be done by your physician that may include lab work, an EKG, and a chest x-ray. You may be given a prescription to take before surgery. Do not take aspirin or ibuprofen for 7 days prior to surgery. If you require these or other blood thinners for a medical condition then be sure your surgeon is aware of the situation. ***You may not eat or drink anything after midnight prior to surgery.*** The surgery is performed as day surgery, meaning you will be able to go home on the same day as the procedure. You will need a ride home from the hospital because you will not be able to drive after having general anesthesia.

After you are asleep in the operating room, the surgeon will use special endoscopes and instruments to perform the surgery through your nostrils. The endoscopes allow for excellent visualization of the nasal cavity and sinuses. Generally, the surgeon will identify the natural outflow pathways for the various sinuses that are diseased. These pathways will then be widened by careful removal of tissue in this area. Sometimes there will be nasal polyps (fleshy masses of tissue) in the nose as well. These will similarly be removed with the endoscopic instruments. The surgery may last anywhere from 30 minutes to 2 ½ hours, depending on the severity of the sinus disease. Usually, there will not be any packing material placed in the nose.

What should I expect after surgery?

Recovery is relatively quick after endoscopic sinus surgery. It is normal to have some tenderness in your nose and sinuses and possibly a headache for the first few days after surgery. You will be given pain medicine for this. You will also have some oozing of blood-tinged mucus for 2-5 days after surgery. You should use a piece of rolled-up gauze under your nostrils that is held there by tape until the oozing subsides. You may be ready to return to light-duty work in 1-2 days but you must avoid strenuous activity and heavy lifting for 2 weeks.

Two days after surgery you should start to use saline (salt water) irrigation. Add one teaspoon of table salt to eight ounces of warm water. Obtain a bulb syringe from a pharmacy and gently irrigate your nose on both sides with the saline. Spray each side 2-3 times over a sink and do this at least 3 times a day for 2 weeks.

You will have a follow-up appointment about one week after surgery. At this time your surgeon may look inside your nose again in the office and remove some mucus crusts or inflamed tissue.

What are the possible complications?

Sinus surgery is commonly performed in the United States and throughout the world. It is considered to be very safe. As with any surgery, there are some risks to consider. Sometimes, the sinus disease is severe enough that it will recur in the future even with appropriate surgery. This may lead more surgery in the future. The sinuses are physically close to important structures such as the eyes and the base of the brain. Injury to these structures might cause loss of smell, double vision, vision loss, leak of spinal fluid from the brain, a stroke, or even death. These complications are possible but they are extremely rare. The most common complication is excessive bleeding but even this is fairly rare.

When should I call my surgeon?

Notify your surgeon immediately if you have:

- a large amount of bright red bleeding from your nose.
- profuse clear watery drainage
- vision changes
- decreased alertness
- any other concerns

Emergencies will be treated at Las Colinas Medical Center (Southeast corner of MacArthur and Highway 161)