

## *Sinus and Nasal Surgery*

### **SINUSES:**

The sinuses are four cavities or rooms opening from each side of the nose. The four sinuses are named maxillary, ethmoid, frontal, and sphenoid. The purpose of sinuses is not completely understood. Sinuses normally produce about a quart of mucus every day. Sinus infections are one of the most common problems that cause a patient to go to a doctor. Blockage of the sinuses due to a virus or allergies is one of several ways that sinus infections can occur. Sinus infections may make lung problems worse.

### ***Reasons for Sinus Surgery:***

1. Decrease the severity and number of sinus infections
2. Make it easier to manage or cure sinus infections
3. Improve breathing if polyps are present
4. Prevent complications associated with blocked sinuses

### ***Expectations After Sinus Surgery:***

Sinus surgery alone does not always completely cure the sinus problems. Most people are much better after sinus surgery, but most patients will still need other medical treatment to keep the sinuses in the best possible shape. Sinus surgery does not cure allergies. Do not be discouraged if you do not feel better right away after the sinus surgery. The sinus surgery just opens up the sinuses, but the lining that has been damaged by infections may take weeks or months to heal so that the sinuses work better again. Be aware that if you have lost your sense of smell from sinus problems, it does not always return after sinus surgery.

### ***Risks from Sinus Surgery:***

Any surgery has some amount of risk associated with it. Your health care provider will discuss these risks in detail with you. This list does not include every single side effect that could possibly occur.

1. Uncommon:
  - a. Nosebleeds in the first few days after surgery
  - b. Recurrence of polyps or sinus infections
2. Rare:
  - a. Injury to the eye causing double vision or blindness
  - b. Spinal fluid leak
  - c. Loss of sense of smell
  - d. Brain injury or death

## **NASAL SEPTUM:**

The septum of the nose is a wall made of cartilage and bone that divides the two sides of the nose. The septum can be deviated or bent due to a broken nose or sometimes it just develops that way. A deviated septum generally creates breathing problems on one side of the nose and does not change from time to time.

### ***Reasons for Septal Surgery:***

1. Improve breathing through the nose.
2. Reduce snoring.
3. Allow better access for sinus surgery.

### ***Expectations After Septal Surgery:***

Most people can breathe better through their nose after septal surgery. It is impossible to get human tissue completely straight, but we can generally straighten your septum enough to help you breathe. You may not breathe perfectly through your nose, but in most circumstances it will be a lot better. You may still need other medical treatment for other conditions such as allergy. Septal surgery does not cure allergies.

### ***Alternatives to Septal Surgery:***

You should have received proper medical treatment before considering septal surgery. There are not many good medical options other than surgery for a deviated septum.

### ***Risks from Septal Surgery:***

Any surgery has some amount of risk associated with it.

1. Uncommon
  - a. Nosebleeds in the first few days after surgery
  - b. Failure to relieve the blockage or recurrence of the blockage
2. Rare
  - a. Change in the outside appearance of the nose
  - b. A hole in the septum that may cause crusting, bleeding, and a whistling noise

## **TURBINATES:**

The turbinates of the nose are found on each side of the nasal cavity. There are four turbinates on each side of the nose, but the lowest or inferior turbinates are the ones most likely to cause problems with the nose. The turbinates are bones covered by lining that can shrink and swell due to allergies, temperature or humidity changes, and a variety of irritants. They filter, warm, and humidify the air. Sometimes the turbinates get too large and block breathing. They usually block breathing on both sides of the nose, but the blockage may be worse on one side of the other depending on the time of the day.

**Reasons for Turbinate Surgery:**

1. Improve breathing through the nose.
2. Reduce snoring.

**Expectations After Turbinate Surgery:**

Most people can breathe better through their nose after turbinate surgery. We can only remove a limited portion of the turbinates, but we can generally remove enough to help you breathe. You may not breathe perfectly through your nose, but in most circumstances it will be a lot better. Turbinate surgery does not cure allergies.

**Alternatives to Turbinate Surgery:**

You should have received treatment with all reasonable medical options before considering turbinate surgery. If your nasal blockage does not bother you much, there is the option to just live with the problem.

**Risks from Turbinate Surgery:**

Any surgery has some amount of risk associated with it.

1. Uncommon
  - a. Nosebleeds in the first few days after surgery
  - b. Failure to relieve the blockage or recurrence of the blockage
2. Rare
  - a. Dryness and crusting of the nose

**Can all of these surgeries be done at once?**

Yes, if needed. The sinuses, septum, and turbinates may be operated on at the same time or separately depending on the patient's problem.