

Endoscopic Sinus Surgery

Symptoms of Sinus Problems

Sinus problems can cause uncomfortable symptoms. Your nose may run constantly. You might have trouble sleeping at night. You may even lose your sense of smell. Other symptoms can include:

- Nasal congestion
- Fullness in ears or eyes
- Green, yellow, or bloody drainage from the nose
- Trouble tasting food
- Frequent headaches
- Facial pain

The Sinuses

Sinuses are hollow chambers within the bones of the face and head. Four pairs of sinuses connect to the nasal cavity through small openings. The sinuses produce mucus which drains into the nose. If the drainage path becomes blocked, infection can result.

Colds and Other Infections- Colds cause the lining of the nose and sinuses to swell and make extra mucus. A buildup of mucus can lead to a more serious infection.

Allergies- Allergies irritate turbinates (the nasal filters and humidifiers) and other tissues. This causes swelling, which can cause a blockage. Over time, this irritation can also lead to polyps.

Polyps- Polyps (sacs of swollen tissue) may form in both the sinuses and nose. Polyps can grow large enough to clog nasal passages and block drainage.

Deviated Septum- When a septum is deviated (crooked), it may block nasal passages. This is often the result of an injury, or caused at the time of birth.

Risks and Complications

Endoscopic surgery has a high rate of success, but does carry risks like any other surgery. Problems may include:

- Infection
- Bruising
- Excessive bleeding
- Altered sense of taste or smell
- Spinal fluid leakage (very rare)
- Injury to the eye (very rare)

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During Surgery

Clearing Passageways- Often, more than one area of the nose and sinuses is treated. Polyps may need to be removed before the entrance to a sinus can be widened. Or your surgeon may fix a deviated septum prior to correcting other problems.

Straightening the Septum- To fix a deviated septum, your surgeon reshapes or trims the cartilage and bone that divides the nose. After surgery there is more breathing space. Enough support remains for the nose to hold its shape.

Removing Polyps- Because polyps can grow in both the nose and sinuses, removing them may involve different techniques. Many surgeons use powdered instruments that help remove polyps without harming nearby tissues.

Opening the Sinuses-

1. The goal is to restore the drainage pathways from the sinuses to the nose. The frontal sinuses are located in the forehead.
2. The ethmoid sinuses are located between the eyes and made up of many small air sacs that drain into the nasal cavity. If the drainage path is blocked from any of these sinuses, your surgeon may open the thin walls of bone that make up that path. This creates a passage through which mucus can drain more easily.
3. The maxillary sinuses are located in the cheeks, reaching from the bottom of the eyes to the upper teeth. The sphenoid sinuses are in the back of the ethmoids, between the ears and behind the eyes.

After Surgery and Recovery

The First Week- You doctor will schedule an office visit one week after surgery to check on your progress. At this visit, dried blood and mucus are removed to promote healing. Any nasal packing will be removed as well. It's normal to feel stuffiness and have pinkish or dark red drainage. You will also need to follow the following guidelines:

- Rinsing your nose and sinuses with Neilmed sinus rinse
- Not blowing your nose
- Avoiding strenuous exercise, straining, or lifting
- Using a humidifier to keep nasal passages moist
- Sleeping with your upper body elevated
- Avoiding hot and spicy foods

The Next Few Weeks- As you're healing, it's normal to feel some stuffiness and have nasal crusting. Keeping your nasal passages clean and moist will help speed the healing process and prevent scarring. And as you feel better, you can start getting back to your normal activities. Continue to follow your doctor's instructions including the following:

- Avoid irritating substances such as dust, chalk, and harsh chemicals
- Use Neilmed sinus rinses or humidifier as directed
- Drink plenty of water
- Avoid exposure to colds and allergic triggers
- Talk with your doctor before swimming or air travel