

Endoscopic sinus surgery (ESS)

Ear, Nose and Throat Department

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Information for Patients

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What are sinuses?

The sinuses are air pockets or cavities in the face. They are found around the eyes and in the cheek bones. They are connected through small openings to the nose. The sinuses normally help to control the temperature and humidity of the air reaching the lungs.

What is sinusitis?

It is a condition when the sinuses get blocked and inflamed. It may or may not be associated with polyps. Patients often complain of a blocked and runny nose with mucus problems and reduction in the sense of smell. Most patients get better without treatment while some may respond to antibiotics, nasal drops or a steroid nasal spray. In rare situations, untreated infection may spread to surrounding structures such as eye socket and the brain.

What is endoscopic sinus surgery?

These are a group of operations offered to patients who have persistent or severe sinusitis or nasal polyp disease. They are designed to improve the natural drainage of the sinuses by removing bone chips and swollen lining from inside the nose. The technique can also be used in some eye conditions such as a blocked tear duct. This type of surgery is performed with a small telescope and camera from inside the nose and avoids external cuts.

What is the alternative to surgery?

Antibiotics, steroid tablets or nasal sprays should be used before considering surgery. Your doctor or specialist will discuss this option with you.

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How is the operation done?

You will usually have a general anaesthetic and be asleep during the operation. It is all done inside your nose without any scars on your face.

Will my nose be packed?

We may need to use dressings inside each nostril to prevent bleeding. These dressings are called 'packs' and will block your nose for a short period of time. They can either dissolve by themselves or they will be taken out on the following morning of the operation. You can get little oozing of blood and some discomfort when the pack is taken out.

Does it hurt?

It is common to have some discomfort and nasal blockage for a couple of weeks after the operation. This doesn't mean that the operation has not worked. You will be given pain killers to ease any discomfort. If you develop severe headaches or significant pain, you should contact the ward, your GP, call 111, or go to your nearest emergency department.

After the operation:

Blow your nose gently for the first week or it might start bleeding. You may be given a salt water spray or douching bottle to help clear your nose. If you sneeze, open your mouth to protect your nose. You may get blood coloured watery discharge over the first two weeks. Your nose will be blocked for 10-14 days after the operation. We may give you some drops or a spray to help with this. You may also be prescribed a course of antibiotics. It is important to stay away from any dust or smoke.

How long will I be off work?

You can expect to go home either the same day or the day after your operation. You will need to rest at home for at least a week. If your job requires heavy lifting, you should take two weeks off. Ask the nurse if you need a fit note.

Can there be problems?

There are some risks that you must be aware of before you give consent to this treatment. These potential complications are rare. You should talk to your surgeon about the likelihood of problems in your case.

- The sinuses are very close to the wall of the eye. Minor bleeding into the skin around the eye can sometimes happen which will cause bruising and a black eye. This usually gets better without special treatment but it is important that you don't blow your nose. In rare occasions (less than 1 in 1000) more serious bleeding can happen inside the eye. This will place the sight at risk that requires further treatment without delay to avoid permanent damage.

Another operation may be needed to stop the bleeding. The chances of this happening are very low.

- The muscles that turn eye balls can be rarely damaged (1 in 1000). This may lead to double vision. Further management by an eye doctor may be needed.
- The sinuses are very close to thin bone at the base of brain. All sinus operations carry a very small risk of leakage of fluid from the space around brain into the nose. If this rare complication happens, you may have to stay in the hospital longer. Sometimes another operation is needed to stop that leak.
- 90 out of every 100 people treated have significant improvement after surgery. Your symptoms especially nasal catarrh might not resolve completely.
- A repeat operation may be necessary at a later date especially if you have polyps.
- Internal scarring can sometimes happen after the operation and cause nasal blockage, but it is easily treated with a minor revision operation.

If you have any questions, please talk to us at your pre-assessment appointment or on the day of surgery itself.

If you need further information, you can email the ENT sister: maria.pereira@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

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اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل
જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

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