

After you leave hospital

Do not blow your nose for 48 hours and try to sneeze with your mouth open as your nose might start bleeding. You can sniff to clear your nose. If it does bleed, do not pinch your nose, but hold some tissues at your nostrils for 10 minutes, whilst sitting upright with your head tilted forward. It also helps to suck ice. Try to avoid hot food and drinks for 48 hours as these can increase the chance of bleeding.

Your nose will be stuffy and blocked for a few weeks and during this time you should try to stay away from dusty or smoky places. We may give you some drops or spray to help reduce this congestion.

One week after your operation, we will see you in clinic and remove your plaster cast. If you have stitches under the tip of your nose, or on your ear or rib, these will be removed too. There will be some stitches inside your nose – these will dissolve and fall out by themselves.

Due to swelling following surgery, your nose may appear slightly larger and feel a little stiff and numb. It can be 6 weeks before the swelling goes away.


Following the operation the skin of the nose is very sensitive to the sun. It is important to wear strong sunscreen (factor 25 or more) for at least six months –even in the winter.

If you have any questions, please ring the ward:

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About rhinoplasty / septorhinoplasty

What is rhinoplasty or septorhinoplasty?

Rhinoplasty is surgery to change the shape and size of the nose, or to improve breathing. Septorhinoplasty includes surgery on the septum, which is a thin piece of cartilage inside your nose between the nostrils.

Why have a rhinoplasty or septorhinoplasty?

If you wish to alter the shape of your nose your doctor may recommend this operation. There are a variety of things that can be done to alter the shape of your nose. It is important that you discuss your expectations with the surgeon.

If your main concern is being able to breathe easily through your nose, your surgeon may have recommended this operation to open up the nasal passages. This will often involve surgery on the septum too.

Before your operation

Arrange for a couple of weeks off work and check that you have a relative or friend who can take you home and look after you for a few days after the operation.

Photographs will be taken to record in your notes how your nose looked before surgery and to allow the surgeon to plan your operation.

We may ask you to attend the pre-assessment clinic, either on the day of your out-patient clinic appointment or following a telephone health questionnaire. This is to ensure that you are fit for your surgery.

How is the operation done?

The operation can take up to 3 hours and is done under a general anaesthetic.

A variety of surgical techniques can be used. Usually, a cut is made just inside the nostrils and the skin of the nose is

separated from the underlying cartilages and bones. The surgeon is then able to operate on the cartilages and bones and change the shape of the nose. This usually involves cutting away or adding some cartilage to create your new nose.

Some surgeons may also make a cut under the tip of the nose, between the nostrils. This is necessary for more complex procedures. Occasionally, the surgeon may need to take some cartilage from your ear or rib and add it to the cartilage of your nose. This will not change the shape or function of your ear.

Will I have to stay in hospital?

Not necessarily. If your operation is straightforward and you meet our day case criteria for your general state of health and home circumstances, you will be able to go home on the day of your operation. We will tell you before you come into hospital whether you can go home on the same day as your operation, or whether you need to stay overnight.

Packs and splints

The doctors may need to put a short dressing in each side of your nose to keep things in place and prevent bleeding. These dressings are called 'packs', and they block your nose so that you have to breathe through your mouth. They are removed before you go home. Removing them can be uncomfortable and you may bleed a little, but this usually settles quickly.

You will often have a plaster cast or splint over your nose after the operation. This is to protect it and keep the structure of the nose stable. This must remain on your nose until it is removed in clinic, 5-8 days after your operation.

Does it hurt after the operation?

The front of your nose may be tender, and you may also have headaches. Ordinary painkillers should help. You may get some blood-coloured watery fluid or mucus from your nose for the first two weeks or so – this is normal.

If cartilage is taken from your rib, it will be sore for a couple of weeks, especially when coughing. Ordinary painkillers should help.

Can there be problems?

Rhinoplasty is safe, but every operation has a small risk. Please discuss this with your doctor when you visit the hospital. The most common problems are:

- Some patients will have bruising and swelling around their eyes following the operation. If this occurs, it may take up to 3 weeks for all signs of bruising to clear. Sleeping upright with extra pillows can help.
- Sometimes your nose bleeds after the operation and we may need to put packs in to stop it. Some patients have nosebleeds at home. These are usually minor but if they continue, contact your nearest A&E Dept.
- Infection is very rare after this operation, but if it happens it can be serious. So if your nose is getting more painful or more blocked see your GP.
- Rarely the operation may leave a hole in your septum, which causes a whistling sound when you breathe because air goes from one side of your nose to the other. Usually it causes no problems and needs no treatment, but further surgery can be carried out if necessary to repair the hole.
- Very rarely, you may have some numbness of your teeth, which usually settles in time.
- About one or two out of every ten patients need operations to further adjust the shape of their nose.

How long will I be off work?

You will need to rest at home for a week afterwards. If you do manual work, you should take 2 weeks off. It is best to avoid flying for 2 weeks. If you are keen on contact sports (eg. rugby, martial arts), you should discuss this with your surgeon, who may advise delaying your surgery. You may start regular exercise, such as gym, running or swimming after 2 weeks.