

Post – Operative Care

Post-Operative Fevers

- Low grade fevers (up to 100 degrees Fahrenheit/ 38 degrees Celsius) are not uncommon after surgery. Cause of these low-grade fevers is not well understood but may be due to the effects of anesthesia or minor collapse of some lung tissue (atelectasis). Treatment of low-grade fevers would include deep breathing exercises to try and expand the lungs, as well as mild physical activity. If the fevers do not subside after one or two days, become more significant or are associated with other concerning symptoms, the patient is encouraged to call our office for further evaluation.

Throat

Tonsillectomy

- Tonsillectomy can be a very painful surgery to recover from. Post-operative pain following a tonsillectomy is not considered a complication but rather an expectation. In more cases the pain involves throat pain and that can radiate into the ears. This pain will often last one week to 1 ½ weeks after surgery. In some cases the pain becomes greater several days (3 – 5 days) after surgery than immediately after surgery. Other common symptoms that accompany a tonsillectomy are foul-smelling breath, nausea and malaise.
- The most significant complication for patients undergoing a tonsillectomy is post-tonsillectomy bleeding. This occurs when a blood vessel in the site of the removed tonsil becomes exposed and then bleeds into the throat. It is common the first couple days after surgery to spit up some blood-colored saliva. A post-tonsillectomy bleeding is usually marked by spitting up bright red blood or clots of blood. **Post-tonsillectomy bleeding is considered an emergency. The patient is urged to call our clinic or the physician on-call immediately to take appropriate intervention.**

Adenoidectomy

- Although adenoidectomy frequently accompanies a tonsillectomy, the post-operative symptoms related to adenoidectomy are not usually as severe as those following a tonsillectomy. In patients just undergoing an adenoidectomy, there may be some associated throat pain and some pain localized to the back of the nose. This pain is usually less in an adenoidectomy than a tonsillectomy. In addition, it's common for patients who have undergone an adenoidectomy to have foul-smelling breath for up to two weeks after surgery. It is also common for patients to develop symptoms of nasal congestion and post-nasal drainage for one to two weeks after an adenoidectomy as this area is healing.

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Ear

Tympanostomy Tubes

- Recovery following tympanostomy tube placement is generally mild. Patients may develop mild discomfort in their ears for a day or two; however, this is usually not long lasting. In addition, placement of tympanostomy tubes may lead to some ear drainage for several days, possibly longer. The purpose of post-operative eardrops is to dry up the ear and prevent further drainage. In the first couple days after surgery, while the drops are being placed, it is not uncommon for some blood-colored ear drainage to drain out the ear. If the patient has prolonged drainage, greater than one week or if there is excessive pain, patients are encouraged to contact our clinic for further evaluation.

Nose

Septoplasty / Turbinate Surgery

- Drainage following a septoplasty / turbinate surgery is a common finding. This drainage may include both mucus and bloody drainage. The drainage can last one to several days after surgery, often requiring placement of mustache gauze dressing to soak up the drainage. If the drainage becomes bloodier or doesn't slow down after several days, the patient is urged to contact our clinic for further evaluation.
- Nasal congestion is a very common symptom following a septoplasty / turbinate surgery. This may be caused by swelling of the inside of the nose due to the surgery, as well as placement of the splints. As such, the congestion may last several days or may not subside until the splints are removed at the post-operative appointment by the physician. If the swelling does not slowly subside after surgery or is associated with significant pain, the patient is encouraged to contact our clinic for further evaluation.
- Pain in the nose or cheeks following a septoplasty / turbinate surgery is also a common symptom. The pain again may last up to several days or may not subside until nasal splints are removed. If the pain does not subside in the absence of splints, increase after several days or is associated with increasing swelling and tenderness to the outside of the nose, the patient is encouraged to contact our clinic for further evaluation.

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Sinus

Endoscopic Sinus Surgery

- Pain and nasal congestion are frequently common symptoms after sinus surgery. The pain may be localized to the nose or may involve the cheek area as well. The pain is usually tolerable with prescribed medications by the physician. If the pain does not subside after several days or is not tolerable even with the administration of prescribed pain medication, the patient is urged to contact our office for further evaluation.
- Nasal drainage is also expected after sinus surgery. Again, this nasal drainage may involve both mucus as well as blood drainage. It is common for the drainage to last up to a week after the surgery. Often times the patient is encouraged to perform nasal irrigations at some point as immediate post-operative care as specified by the physician. The administration of saline irrigations may also result in the evacuation of clotted blood thereby resulting in some blood-colored drainage. If the drainage does not subside after several days, becomes increasingly bloody or is constant in nature, the patient urged to contact our clinic for further evaluation.
- A rare but serious complication following sinus surgery involves orbital trauma or bleeding. Symptoms associated with this complication would include visual changes such as double vision, loss of vision, blurry vision eye pain, swelling of the eye, or bruising involving tissue around the eye or in the eye. **If any of these symptoms are present this is considered an emergency and the patient is urged to contact our clinic immediately for further evaluation.**
- Another rare but significant complication involves the leak of spinal fluid (CSF) into the nose following surgery. This complication may be recognized by the constant, slow dripping of clear to blood-colored secretions from the nose for several days after surgery. In addition, the onset of headaches following surgery, although common, may herald the onset of the complication as well. If these symptoms are noted by the patient, the patient is encouraged to contact our clinic for further evaluation.