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After sinus surgery (FESS)

Home instructions — keep this sheet where you can find it

Saline rinsing — the most important thing you will do

- Start day 1 or 2. A full squeeze bottle (200–240 ml) through each side.
- At least twice a day; three or four times daily in the first two weeks. You cannot overdo it.
- Continue at least 6 weeks, usually 3 months. With nasal polyps, keep going indefinitely.
- Use previously boiled and cooled, or distilled or bottled water — never straight from the tap.
- Lean forward, mouth open, breathe through your mouth, squeeze gently. Do not sniff or swallow.
- Expect blood-stained fluid, clots and dark crusts to come out. That is exactly what should happen.

First two weeks

DO

- Sleep propped up for 3–4 nights
- Ice pack over the bridge of the nose, first 48 hours
- Sniff back gently or dab the nose
- Sneeze with your mouth open
- Drink plenty of fluid
- Start a stool softener if you are on codeine

DON'T

- No nose blowing for 7 days
- No lifting over 5 kg, no straining, no bending over
- No hot baths, saunas or alcohol for a week
- No smoking
- Decongestant spray: 5 days maximum, only if instructed
- No aspirin (Disprin, Grandpa, Ecotrin)

Pain relief

Paracetamol	1 g every 6 hours (max 4 g a day) for 3–4 days. Take it by the clock.
Ibuprofen	400 mg every 8 hours with food for 3–5 days, together with the paracetamol. Skip it if you have an ulcer, kidney problems, or asthma set off by anti-inflammatories.
Antibiotics	Not routine. Only if specifically prescribed.
Steroid spray	Restart when I tell you — usually at your first follow-up, once the crusts are cleared.

What to expect

Days 1–7	Blood-stained discharge, and a blocked, heavy, congested feeling. This is crust and swelling, not failure.
Week 1–2	First visit: the nose is cleared under endoscope. Take painkillers 45 minutes before. Back to desk work at 5–7 days.
Weeks 2–6	Airflow steadily improves. One or two more cleaning visits. Exercise from 2 weeks, gym from 3–4 weeks, flying from 2 weeks.
3 months	The lining has healed and the true result can be judged.
Smell and taste	Often worse for the first two weeks before they improve. This is normal — do not judge it early.

Phone us

- Heavy bright red bleeding that will not stop after 15 minutes of pinching the soft part of the nose
- Clear watery drip from one nostril, salty or metallic, worse when leaning forward
- Swelling, bruising or pain around the eye, or any change in vision or double vision — emergency unit immediately
- Severe headache with neck stiffness, fever, dislike of light or confusion — emergency unit immediately
- Facial pain increasing after day 4, or fever over 38 °C with thick foul-smelling discharge

If anything worries you, phone. It is always better to ask than to wait.

Rooms 021 975 0840/1 — redirected to Dr Vermaak after hours.