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After septoplasty and turbinate surgery

Home instructions — keep this sheet where you can find it

Rinse your nose with saline. It is the most important thing you will do.

Start the day after surgery, 2–3 times a day for 4–6 weeks. Use a large-volume rinse bottle with cooled boiled or bottled water, never straight from the tap. Hypertonic (sea-water strength) sachets clear crusts best. Old clots washing out is normal.

Your nose will feel more blocked for 2–3 weeks. This is swelling, not a failed operation. Judge the result at 3–6 months.

DO

- Sleep with your head raised on 2–3 pillows for the first week
- Sneeze with your mouth open
- Dab the nostrils and let crusts come away with rinsing
- Walk and move around from the day after surgery
- Use the steroid spray after rinsing, aimed outwards, away from the middle of the nose

DON'T

- Blow your nose for 7 days. After that, blow gently through both sides
- Pick or pull at crusts, or touch the splints
- Bend, strain, lift heavy things, or take hot baths and saunas for 1 week
- Smoke, vape, or drink alcohol for the first week
- Take aspirin, unless it was prescribed for your heart

Pain relief and medication

- **Paracetamol and ibuprofen** regularly for the first 2–3 days, by the clock, unless you have been told not to take ibuprofen. Use stronger tablets only if these are not enough.
- **Decongestant spray (Iliadin, Otrivin):** only for bleeding or severe blockage, and never for more than 5 days. Longer use causes rebound blockage.
- **Antibiotics:** only if prescribed. They are not needed routinely.

If your nose bleeds: sit up, lean forward, and pinch the soft part of the nose firmly for 15 minutes without letting go. If it continues, use 2 sprays of decongestant on that side and pinch for another 15 minutes.

Recovery at a glance

WHEN	WHAT TO EXPECT
Days 1–3	Blocked nose, blood-stained ooze, dry mouth. Swelling is at its worst.
Day 7	**First visit.** Splints removed and the nose cleaned. Many people feel much better afterwards. Desk work from about now.
Week 2	Normal daily activity and light housework. Flying is fine from now on.
Week 4	**Second visit.** Gym, running and swimming are fine from now on.
2 months	Contact sport. Diving only once you have been cleared.
3–6 months	Swelling settles fully. Numbness of the front teeth and nose tip resolves.

Phone the rooms on 021 975 0840/1 or go to the emergency unit if you have:

- Bleeding that does not stop after 30 minutes of the steps above, or that you are swallowing
- Worsening blockage, pressure or pain in the first week, especially on one side (a blood collection that needs draining)
- A temperature above 38.5 °C, especially with a rash, vomiting or feeling faint while splints are in
- A constant drip of clear watery fluid, a severe headache with a stiff neck, or swelling around the eye or a change in vision

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