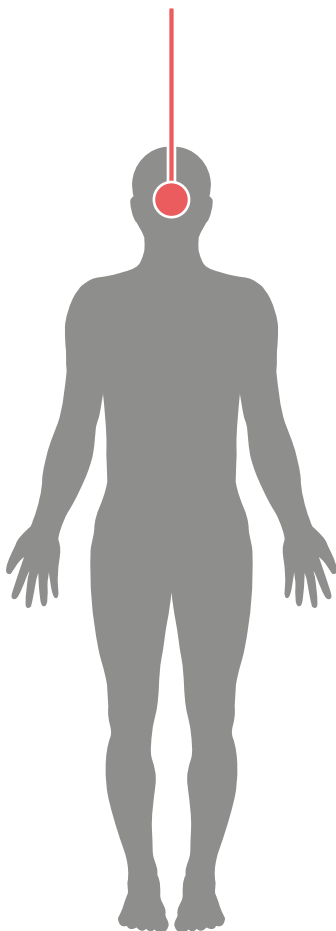


# Get Well Soon

## Helping you to make a speedy recovery after nasal septoplasty

### Nasal Septoplasty



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This leaflet is a guide to recovering from a nasal septoplasty operation. It does not provide specific medical advice or diagnosis. Nor does it give advice about whether you should consent to an operation. All of these matters depend on individual medical advice from your consultant surgeon based on your own health, medical condition and personal circumstances.

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## Who this leaflet is for

### Print instructions:

To print this document click once on the print icon in your Acrobat Browser, or go to File, then Print on the drop down menu.

To print only one page, select the page number you want in your print menu, usually under 'options' or 'preferences' depending on the printer type.

To save ink, select the 'draft' option.

This leaflet is for anyone who is recovering from, or is about to undergo, surgery to straighten the cartilage in their nose.

The technical term for your operation is a nasal septoplasty, which is how your surgeon and other health professionals who are helping you may refer to it.

This leaflet should be read in conjunction with any other information that you have already been given about your procedure.

The following information is designed to help you make decisions about your recovery. Your surgeon, general practitioner (GP) and other healthcare professionals will offer you a lot of very good advice – but ultimately, it's you that has to make the decisions.

The advice in this leaflet offers broad guidelines for people who do not have any complications with their surgery or other specific medical circumstances, such as a long-term condition.

Obviously, every individual has different needs and recovers in different ways – so not all of the advice in this leaflet will be suitable for everybody. When you are weighing up how to make the decision that's right for you, talk with your Occupational Health Service at work, if you have one. Otherwise, talk with your GP. They will both help you to make the right choices for a safe and speedy recovery.

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## What to expect after the operation

### Scar

There will be no visible scarring because there are no external cuts involved in this surgery. The incision (cut) is made inside the nose.

### Stitches

Sometimes, stitches are used on the skin inside the nostril. These usually dissolve by themselves and so do not need removing.

### Dressings

Usually an absorbent dressing, like a small sponge, will be packed inside your nostrils to control any bleeding. This will be removed by a nurse within 24 hours of your operation. Some patients, uncommonly, may also need splints to keep the nasal cartilage straight - these are thin plastic sheets stitched to the inside of the nostril. If splints are used, these will be removed for you about 1 week after the operation, usually in the outpatient clinic.

### Discomfort

If you have a dressing, your nose will be totally blocked, so you will have to breathe through your mouth until the dressings are removed. Because of mouth-breathing, your throat will feel dry – regular sips of water will sort this out.

After the dressing is removed, your nose will continue to feel blocked as the linings of your nose will be swollen. For the first 2 weeks, sneeze with your mouth open, and do not blow your nose hard. As your nose heals, dryness and crusting in the nose are normal. Often, you will be recommended to use a salt-water rinse to help with this; alternatively, steam inhalations can be recommended, as these are very soothing.

### Tiredness

Your body is using energy to heal itself, so you may feel more tired than normal – this is perfectly normal.

### Sport

If you play rugby or do martial arts, you should discuss returning to these activities with your surgeon before the operation.

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## Things that will help you recover more quickly

If you live alone, and you do not have family or friends living close by, organise support in advance.

### **Eat healthily**

Fresh fruit and vegetables will help to ensure that your body has all of the nutrients it needs to heal. This is important even though you may not feel like eating because of a temporary loss of taste and smell due to the blocked nose.

### **Stop smoking**

By not smoking – even if it's just for the time that you're recovering – you immediately start to improve your circulation and your breathing. This is a good time to give up, as you often don't feel like smoking for a week or two after the surgery!

### **Family and friends**

Family and friends can give you two important things:

- Practical help with the tasks you might be temporarily unable to do in the first day or so – such as driving, the weekly shop, or lifting heavier items.
- Keeping your spirits up!

### **Keep a routine**

Get up at your normal time in the morning, get dressed and move about the house. If you get tired, you can rest later.

### **Build up gradually**

Have a go at doing some of the things you'd normally do, but build up gradually. Some suggestions are included in the recovery tracker. Obviously everyone recovers at a different speed, so not all of the suggestions will be suitable for everybody.

When you're building up your activities you probably won't feel like doing much exercise in the first few days, but walking is the best way to return to fitness before resuming your normal activities. If you feel pain, you have probably just overdone it a little. Ease back on your activities and then gradually increase them again. If you are concerned, consult your GP.

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## Returning to work

You do not need your GP's permission to go back to work – this is ultimately your decision.

### **Fact: Work can be part of your recovery**

Everyone needs time off to recover after an operation – but too much of it can stand in the way of you getting back to normal. Getting back to your normal routine sooner rather than later can actually help you to recover more quickly.

### **Getting back to work**

How quickly you return to work depends on a number of things:

- How you heal
- How you respond to surgery
- The type of job you do

People whose work involves a lot of heavy lifting or standing up for long periods, for example, may not be able to return to work quite as quickly as those who have office jobs, which are less demanding physically.

### **How soon can I go back?**

Every person recovers differently and has different needs. Septoplasty is a relatively minor procedure and the majority of individuals who are doing administrative roles will normally be back at work after about a week or so. Jobs that are more physically demanding and involve heavy lifting might require a more graduated return to full activities over, say, another week. Contact sports or roles involving control and restraint should be avoided for a bit longer, say 2–4 weeks, but this should be discussed with your surgeon.

If your employer has an occupational health nurse or doctor, they will advise you on this. Alternatively, your GP can give you advice. Ultimately, it's your decision when you want to go back, and there's no insurance risk to your employer if you choose to do so.

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## Planning for your return

### 3 golden rules for a speedy recovery:

Stay active.

Keep a normal daily routine.

Keep social contact with people.

Talk to your Occupational Health Service or GP to work out when and how is best for you to return to work.

Depending on the nature of your job, you might want to ask your employer about returning to work on lighter duties at first. This means:

If you have an HR Department at work, they will be able to advise you regarding sick pay or any other benefit you may be entitled to during your time off. Alternatively, talk directly with your employer.

### Confidence

It will take you a little while to regain your full confidence when you go back to work. You may be slower than normal at first, so don't take on too much responsibility too soon. Don't be too hard on yourself about this - it's perfectly normal and you'll start to get back up to speed after a few days.

- spending more time sitting, rather than standing or doing lots of walking.
- doing work that is mostly paperwork, using a computer or telephone.
- not carrying heavy items significant distance.
- avoiding tasks such as prolonged loading or unloading, packing or unpacking.

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## Driving

Ultimately, it is your responsibility to ensure that you are in control of the vehicle at all times and to feel confident that you would be able to demonstrate this, if asked.


Normally, you will be fit to drive 1 day after the operation.

Before resuming driving, you will need to be fully recovered from your surgical procedure. You should also be free from the distracting effect of pain, or the sedative or other effects of any pain relief medication you are taking, to be able to concentrate fully on driving. You should be comfortable in the driving position and able to safely control your car, including freely performing an emergency stop.

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## Recovery tracker

Days/Weeks Post Op	How you might feel	Things you can do safely	Traffic light	Fit to work?
1–2 days	Your nose will feel sore, and much more stuffy than it did before the operation. Once the dressings are removed from your nose, you may still need to breathe through your mouth for a week or so. There may be some dark, bloodstained mucus discharge from your nose. This is normal and you shouldn't worry about it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Get up, get dressed, move around the house.</li><li>• Eat and drink as normal.</li><li>• Go for a short walk in the morning – no more than 5–10 minutes – then go home and rest.</li><li>• Go for another short walk or two later in the day, resting between each one. This will help to avoid stiffness of the muscles and joints.</li><li>• If you feel tired, rest for a while, then try moving around again later. Taking regular sips of water will prevent dry-mouth and throat.</li><li>• Take pain relief only as prescribed by your doctor.</li></ul>		<b>No</b>

### When can I have sex?

For many people, being able to have sex again is an important milestone in their recovery. There are no set rules or times about when it's safe to do so other than whether it feels okay to you – treat it like any other physical activity and build up gradually.

### specific print instructions:

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## Recovery tracker

Days/Weeks Post Op	How you might feel	Things you can do safely	Traffic light	Fit to work?
3–7 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For about a week, your nose will still feel more stuffy than before the operation.</li> <li>Be careful not to blow your nose too hard, as this can cause bleeding. Sneeze with your mouth open.</li> <li>Dryness and crusting in the nose; some bloodstained mucus from the nose.</li> <li>Avoid hard physical exercise, as this may cause a nosebleed.</li> <li>If you have plastic splints in your nose, these will be taken out by a nurse or your surgeon after about 7 days.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue as days 1–2; have a go at some of the things you would normally do.</li> <li>Go for a longer walk in the morning – 20–30 minutes – then go home and rest. Go for another walk or two later in the day, resting between each one. Again, this will help to avoid stiffness of the muscles and joints.</li> <li>You may still occasionally need to take mild pain relief at this time.</li> <li>Try to avoid crowds and people with colds.</li> </ul>		Yes

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## Recovery tracker

Days/Weeks Post Op	How you might feel	Things you can do safely	Traffic light	Fit to work?
7–10 days	In the second week, you should notice an improvement in your breathing, as well as less pain in your nose. There will still be some crusting and dryness in your nose. Do not blow your nose too hard.	<p>You should be back to your normal daily activities now; you should be able to walk as much as you like, start cycling and do gentle jogging. Don't over-exert yourself physically: it's important to avoid nose-bleeds.</p> <p>Many people will be back to work after 7 days. You can monitor your progress using the recovery diary.</p>		<b>Getting there/yes</b>
10–14 days	By day 14, your breathing might still be a bit restricted.	You should now be able to do most of your normal routine. Swimming is allowed.		<b>Yes</b>

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## Recovery tracker

Days/Weeks Post Op	How you might feel	Things you can do safely	Traffic light	Fit to work?
3–4 weeks		<p>Your nose should be starting to clear by now; however, it can take 4–6 weeks after the operation for your nose to settle completely.</p> <p>Most people who have had the operation will be back at work by now, unless there are special circumstances – complications, for example, or their job demands a lot of physical exertion, control and restraint, and heavy manual work. If you're still off work, it's possible that you're feeling anxious about returning and could do with a bit of help from your GP and your employer. Talk with them both about a gradual return to work.</p> <p>If you're off for too long, there's a risk of developing problems to do with anxiety, isolation and lack of confidence. These could affect your quality of life in the long term. Talk with your doctor about how best to avoid this becoming a problem for you.</p>		Yes
6 weeks	You should be able to return to normal sports now, but follow the advice from your surgeon before resuming sports like rugby and martial arts.			

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## After you get home

Day	Got up at ... am	Activities (eg walked for ... minutes)	How many hours rest I needed?	What times I needed to rest:	Went to bed at ... pm	How's your nose feeling? Any discharge?	How's your breathing?
1							
2							

Keeping a track of what you've achieved each day will help you to stay positive and get back to enjoying your normal life more quickly.

Remember, take a step-by-step approach to getting better and build up your activities. If you're concerned about anything or if you feel you're not making progress fast enough, call your GP or NHS Direct on 0845 46 47.

### specific print instructions:

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## After you get home

Day	Got up at ... am	Activities (eg walked for ... minutes)	How much rest I needed after each:	Went to bed at ... pm	How've I been feeling? Any pain?	How's your nose feeling? Any discharge?	How's your breathing?	What do I want to achieve tomorrow?
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								

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## After you get home

Day	Got up at ... am	Activities (eg walked for ... minutes)	How much rest I needed after each:	Went to bed at ... pm	How've I been feeling? Any pain?	How's your nose feeling? Any discharge?	How's your breathing?	What do I want to achieve tomorrow?
9								
10								
11								
12								
13								
14								

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## Keeping well

Because of your operation, the chances are you'll be a lot more aware of your body and how it works.

Right now is a really good time to build on the knowledge you've gained and make small changes to your lifestyle that can prevent you from experiencing certain health problems in the future. You can do this by:

- Improving your diet – get 5 portions of fresh fruit and veg per day.
- Any exercise – even if it's just a few short walks each day – really will make a difference to your health.
- Quit Smoking – NHS Stop Smoking Services are one of the most effective ways to stop for good – and they're free. Your doctor will be happy to help you.

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## Website links

The internet's a great thing – anything you want to know is there for you at the click of a mouse, but do be careful about the way you use it when it comes to getting information about your health. It's hard to know which sites to trust and none of them can tell you anything that's specific to your individual medical needs.

If you do want to know more about your operation, recovery or return to work, here is a list of trusted websites that offer safe, sensible, useful information:

**The Royal College of Surgeons of England**  
<http://www.rcseng.ac.uk/>

**ENT UK**  
<https://entuk.org/>

**NHS Stop Smoking Service**  
<http://smokefree.nhs.uk/>

**NHS Choices**  
<http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/Homepage.aspx>

**Department for Work and Pensions**  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions>

**GOV.UK**  
<https://www.gov.uk/>

**DVLA - Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency**  
<https://www.gov.uk/browse/driving/disability-health-condition>

Call 111 for nonemergency medical advice