

# Rhinoplasty Post-Op 101: What to Expect

After your procedure, you will have an external splint. You may have internal splints as well if more septal work is done (this could be to correct a crooked nose or a deviated septum). These splints provide structure and support to the nose during the early healing period. At 1 week post-op, Dr. Ditesheim or his nurse will remove both the internal and external splints, plus any stitches you have. This first week is when you will likely be the most uncomfortable. **This is normal, and expected!** You should use your pain medication as prescribed, plus Tylenol and cold therapy.

The following content answers frequently asked questions from real patients after having the Rhinoplasty procedure. As always, if you have additional questions, you are encouraged to contact Dr. Ditesheim and his nurse. We are here to help you through this process.

## 1. Why does it feel hard to breathe out of my nose?

- a. It is normal to feel congested after your Rhinoplasty surgery. This is due to swelling of the nasal tissues, which is expected after surgery. You may also have some dried blood and mucous that is blocking your air flow through your nasal passages. That is also normal and very common. **2 TIPS:**
  - i. Start a decongestant. This can help to reduce inflammation of the nasal mucosa and open up the airway. Some examples are Allegra-D, Claritin-D, and Mucinex. Taking a decongestant consistently for the first week can help improve symptoms.
  - ii. Gently clean out your nostrils with saline nasal spray (provided in your post-care surgery bag) and q-tips. Keeping the insides of the nostrils moist will help to prevent some of the dried blood and mucous that can “clog” your airway. Gently use the moistened q-tip inside the nostril to clean.
  - iii. Take a steam shower. Close the door to your bathroom and run a warm shower. You can use eucalyptus essential oil or Vicks vapor rub to create a menthol/steam combination that can help open up your airway.

## 2. I still have bloody drainage coming from my nose. Is that normal?

- a. Yes. This is very normal. We will send you home with some 2x2 gauze or pads to place at the base of your nose to collect bloody drainage. Switch them out as needed. The drainage should stop sometime in the first week. If you experience

sudden heavy bleeding (like a heavy nose bleed), notify Dr. Ditesheim or his nurse.

### **3. Why are my eyes bruised and swollen?**

- a. You are experiencing inflammation of the eyes from the surgical manipulation done to the bridge of the nose. This is normal! You should use a cold compress on the eyes to help bring down inflammation. If you are experiencing extreme discomfort and inability to open your eyes, let Dr. Ditesheim's nurse know. You can expect this swelling to improve greatly over the first week. You can expect bruising to dissipate by weeks 2-3.

### **4. My face and smile feel stiff. Is this normal?**

- a. Yes! This can be common if a tip graft is used to provide additional support at the base of the nose. As swelling comes down over the first 1-2 months, you will be able to animate your face more naturally. Remember, this feels much more exaggerated to you than it looks to anyone else.

### **5. Can I blow my nose?**

- a. You should try to avoid blowing your nose for the first 2 weeks after surgery.  
**TIP:** Use some saline spray in each nostril to soften any dried blood and mucus, then blow out your nose very **gently**. You may want to do this over your sink, as wiping with a tissue may feel uncomfortable to you in the early stages of recovery.

### **6. How long will it take for all of the swelling to come down?**

- a. Rhinoplasty is a very intricate procedure, involving delicate manipulation of small pieces of tissue, cartilage, and bone. Therefore, recovery for this surgery can take a long time before you are able to see the true, final result. Around 3 months post-op, you should feel like a majority of the swelling has subsided. By this point, we expect you to be "out and about" enjoying your new nose! That being said, it will take a full year to see the "final" result. Inflammation will continue to subside over time and your new nose will feel more and more like it was the one you always envisioned for yourself. So, patience is key!