

Intra-nasal polypectomy (page 1 of 2)

Why do I need this operation?

This operation is to improve your nasal airway, which is blocked by grape-like swellings of the nasal lining which are filling the nose. These are called polyps.

Other treatments will have been tried in the Outpatient Department before deciding on surgical removal and it is important to realise that medical treatment using steroid drops and sprays may need to be continued after the surgery.

What happens during the operation?

While you are asleep under a general anaesthetic, the polyps will be removed from the nose. This is done through the nostrils and there are no scars. At the end of the operation there may be bleeding from the nose and a pack may be put in the nose to stop this. The packing will be removed either later on the same day, or the next day. Sometimes the surgeon uses dissolvable packs that do not need to be removed but break down slowly over a week.

How will I feel after the operation?

At first you will be drowsy until the anaesthetic has worn off. If the nose is packed you will have to breathe through your mouth – this will give you a dry throat. When the nasal packs are removed there may be some bleeding. This usually lasts a few minutes but occasionally we have to re-pack the nose. Once the packing is removed breathing should be easier through the nose.

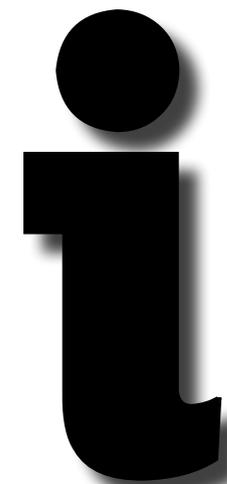
After the operation there will be increased production of secretions and you will have a blood-stained runny nose for up to two weeks.

What are the possible complications of this operation?

Bleeding – as mentioned above, this often happens when the packs are removed but usually settles down within 10 minutes. Rarely, the packs need replacing; this is done using a local anaesthetic.

Secondary (delayed) bleeding may occur after you go home. If it is heavy or persistent you are advised to contact the Day Surgical Unit or your GP for advice. You may be readmitted to hospital and rarely you may need to return to the operating theatre to control the bleeding.

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Infection – this is uncommon but when it occurs you will have a persistent smelly discharge, pain and sometimes fever. You should seek advice from your GP or the ENT Department if this happens to you.

Adhesions inside the nose – these are bands of the nasal lining which form across the interior of the nose. Most of the adhesions are small and produce no symptoms. If they form and cause nasal obstruction they can be divided under a local anaesthetic by the surgeon.

What if I decided against the operation?

Your symptoms will persist and may become worse.

What other treatments are there?

Oral steroid medication will cause the polyps to shrink but when treatment has stopped they may grow again. Oral steroid treatment has a number of side effects, which can upset your health. For some people it is dangerous to use these drugs. A steroid spray or drops can be used up the nose and may improve your symptoms if the polyps are small. However this treatment is less likely to make the polyps shrink completely and will have to be taken every day.

Will the polyps grow again?

In around half of patients who have this operation the polyps will return. It is not possible to predict when this will happen or to whom. If you have had polyps removed before they probably will return at some time after the operation. The recurrence of polyps is prevented or delayed in some people by using a steroid nasal spray daily over a prolonged period of time.

How long will I stay in hospital?

Your surgery will either be done as a day case (you go home the same day) or you will stay in hospital for one night following the operation.

Advice after surgery

For one week after your operation you should rest, avoid strenuous activities and avoid contact with people with coughs and colds. You should also avoid very hot drinks or hot baths/showers during this time.

You may be given some nasal spray or drops to use after the operation. Saline spray or douche is often prescribed to clear the nose of secretions prior to using the steroid spray. You will be advised how long to use these by the doctors or nurses on the ward before you go home.

When can I go back to work?

We advise taking one week off work following surgery.