

Septoplasty

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This fact sheet is for general information about this procedure only. It is not intended to be used as medical advice or to replace advice that your relevant healthcare professional would give you. If you have a particular medical problem, please consult a healthcare professional.

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What is a deviated nasal septum?

The septum is the cartilage and bone inside your nose that separates your nostrils. The septum is usually straight but it can be deviated (bent), causing symptoms of a blocked nose.

What are the benefits of surgery?

Your nasal airway will be more open, which should relieve your symptoms of a blocked nose.

Are there any alternatives to surgery?

You cannot straighten your septum without surgery.

What will happen if I decide not to have the operation or the operation is delayed?

Your nose will continue to feel blocked but it should not get worse.

Contact your healthcare team if you experience:

- A runny nose.
- A nose bleed.
- Pain.
- A change in sense of smell.
- Hearing loss.

What does the operation involve?

The operation is usually performed under a general anaesthetic but a local anaesthetic can be used. The operation usually takes about 45 minutes.

Your surgeon will make a cut on the lining of your nose over your septum and lift the mucosa away from the cartilage and bone. They will remove the parts of the cartilage and bone that are bent and they will put the rest back in a straight position.

Your surgeon may place some packing in your nose to prevent bleeding. The packing will either dissolve in a few days or will be removed a few hours after the operation.

How can I prepare myself for the operation?

If you smoke, stopping smoking now may reduce your risk of developing complications and will improve your long-term health. Smoking stops your nose clearing mucus properly and this can increase the feeling of a blocked nose.

Try to maintain a healthy weight. You have a higher risk of developing complications if you are overweight. Regular exercise should help to prepare you for the operation, help you to recover and improve your long-term health. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

Speak to the healthcare team about any vaccinations you might need to reduce your risk of serious illness while you recover. When you come into hospital, practise social distancing and hand washing and wear a face covering when asked.

What complications can happen?

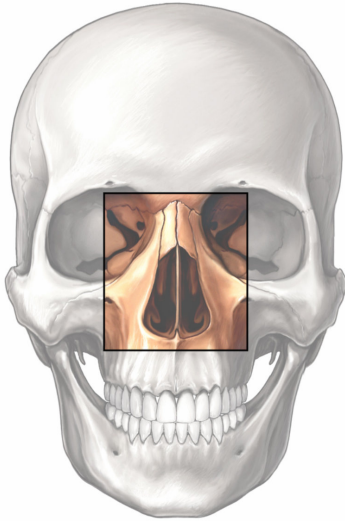
Some complications can be serious and can even cause death.

General complications of any operation

- Bleeding
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Allergic reaction to the equipment, materials or medication
- Blood clot in your leg
- Blood clot in your lung
- Chest infection

Specific complications of this operation

- Adhesions, where scar tissue forms deep inside your nose and can obstruct airflow
- Developing a collection of blood (haematoma) or an abscess between the layers of your septum
- Making a hole in your septum
- Damage to nerves that supply the skin and the gum over your front upper teeth
- Change to the shape of your nose



A straight nasal septum



A bent nasal septum

- Reduced sense of smell
- Toxic shock syndrome, which is an infection of your bloodstream
- Recurrence of the deviation

Consequences of this procedure

- Pain

How soon will I recover?

You should be able to go home the same day.

If you had non-dissolvable packing in your nose, you will need to stay overnight and the packing will be removed the next morning.

It is important to avoid catching a cold, which could cause infection inside your nose. Your doctor may advise you to stay off work and away from groups of people for a few days or up to 2 weeks after the operation, depending on the risk.

Do not exercise, have a hot bath or bend down for 2 weeks.

Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

Most people make a full recovery and can return to normal activities.

Summary

Surgery will result in you having a straight septum, which should relieve your symptoms of a blocked nose.

Keep this information document. Use it to help you if you need to talk to the healthcare team.

Some information, such as risk and complication statistics, is taken from global studies and/or databases. Please ask your surgeon or doctor for more information about the risks that are specific to you, and they may be able to tell you about any other suitable treatments options.

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Acknowledgements

Reviewer

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Illustrator

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