

Trimming of the inferior turbinates

What is trimming of the inferior turbinates and why do I need this operation?

This operation is performed to improve your nasal airway. Turbinates are soft pieces of tissue within the nose whose function is to increase the surface area of the nasal cavity in order to warm and moisten air passing through the nose. Enlargement of these turbinates, (due to allergy or infection), causes obstruction of the nose.

What are the benefits of having your turbinates trimmed?

The benefit of having your turbinates trimmed is that you will be able to breathe through your nose more easily.

What are the risks and consequences associated with having your turbinates trimmed?

Most procedures are straightforward; however as with any surgical procedures there is a small chance of side-effects or complications.

The most common potential complications are:

1. Bleeding from the nose (epistaxis) which may occur immediately after your operation or several days afterwards.
2. Adhesions - Occasionally adhesions may develop between the walls of the inside of the nose, which may require further surgery.

Your consultant has recommended this procedure as being the best option.

However the alternatives to this procedure are steroid nasal sprays, or having a less minor procedure such as cautery to inferior turbinates or a submucosal diathermy (SMD). If you would like more information, please speak to your consultant.

There is also the option of not receiving any treatment at all. The consequences of not receiving any treatment are that your nasal symptoms will remain unchanged. If you would like more information speak to your consultant.

Getting ready for the operation

You will be asked to attend the pre-operative assessment clinic. A nurse will discuss the operation with you. You may need to undergo some routine tests before operation eg. heart trace (ECG), x-ray, blood test.

You will be asked some routine questions about your general health, whether you smoke or drink alcohol and the medicines you take at the moment. It would be helpful if you bring a list of your medicines with you as the nurse will need to know their strength; this includes any non-prescription medicines including complimentary/herbal medicines.

Please feel free to ask questions and raise any concerns you may have regarding your operation.

For a time before certain types of anaesthetic you will need to stop eating, drinking and chewing gum. This will be explained to you and you may also be given a booklet about this. If you have any questions please contact the hospital - telephone number on your admission letter.

You will be asked to have a bath/shower before coming into hospital (if possible).

If you have been prescribed a nasal spray please continue using it whilst waiting for your operation, unless advised otherwise by the doctor.

Smoking cessation

Smoking greatly increases the risk of complications during and after surgery, so the sooner you can stop the better. Even a few days before your operation can help to improve healing and recovery afterwards. For free help and advice contact the *NHS Derby City Stop Smoking Service* (Fresh Start) on Freephone 0800 7076870 or *Derbyshire County Stop Smoking Service* on Freephone 0800 085229.

On admission

When you arrive on the ward you will be introduced to the staff and shown to your bed. Your details (name, date of birth etc) will be checked on a number of occasions before the operation. This is normal practice and is for your safety. You will be given an operation gown and a wristband to wear.

You will have the opportunity to discuss your operation with staff. It is important that you understand your operation, and the risks involved before you sign a consent form to this effect.

You will be given the choice of walking to the anaesthetic room or alternatively you could be taken in a wheelchair if you wish.

A small needle or cannula will be inserted into the back of your hand.

The operation is then performed through your nose which means there is **no external cut (incision)**.

What sort of anaesthetic will I have?

Your operation will be performed under a general anaesthetic (you will be asleep) and because of this you are advised not to drive for 48 hours. You will be given information and an opportunity to discuss the anaesthetic with the anaesthetist.

What should I expect after the operation?

There is the possibility of swallowing some blood during the operation, which may result in you being sick during your recovery period.

You will probably have packing in both nostrils and consequently will have to breathe through your mouth. These packs help to control the bleeding you may experience during your immediate recovery period and are removed before your discharge.

A small dressing or nasal sling is applied under your nose to help prevent any trickling from the packs onto your face.

When you return to the ward you may still be sleepy. Your blood pressure and pulse will be monitored at regular intervals until you are fully recovered.

You will be given a mouthwash on return to the ward to freshen your mouth. A drink of water will be offered 1 - 2 hours after your return to the ward.

Going home

Usually you are able to go home the day after your operation depending on the surgeon's instructions. Staff will be able to answer any questions you may have before your discharge.

DISCHARGE INFORMATION AND AT HOME ADVICE

Your nose will feel blocked and congested after surgery which may last for 2 weeks. Steam inhalations will ease this and advice will be given on the ward accordingly.

Avoid blowing your nose for the first 2 - 3 days following surgery, then only very gently, one side at a time.

If you experience any pain take what you normally would do for a headache. Do not exceed the stated dose.

If you smoke, we strongly advise you to stop as this irritates the lining of the nose and the nasal sinuses.

Pain relief

It is usual to feel some pain after this operation. Take either the painkillers you were given from the hospital or a mild painkiller such as Paracetamol - follow the manufacturer's instructions and do not exceed the stated dose.

Returning to normal activities

We advise you to take a minimum of 2 weeks off work depending on your employment.

During this time you should avoid smoky areas eg. public houses and/or crowded places where you are likely to come into contact with coughs, colds and infections.

Driving information

For at least 24 - 48 hours you must not drive a car. Your insurance company may refuse to meet a claim if they feel you have driven too soon. It is advisable to contact your insurance company with regards to cover following a general anesthetic.

Further appointments

An appointment will be made approximately for 6 - 8 weeks and if you are not given a date before you leave hospital, it will be posted to you.

We hope your recovery is speedy and uneventful.

If you have any queries please telephone
Head and Neck Outpatients on 01332 787472,
Monday to Friday, 9.00am - 5.00pm.

After 5.00pm and at weekends contact Ward 307 on 01332 787307

NHS Direct is a 24 hour nurse led, confidential service providing
general health care advice and information.
Telephone 0845 4647 or visit the website at www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

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