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FUNCTIONAL ENDOSCOPIC SINUS SURGERY (FESS)

What are the sinuses?

The sinuses are air containing cavities in the skull. They drain into the nose through narrow channels. The maxillary sinus is present in the cheek bone. The ethmoid sinuses are a series of small cavities located between the eyes. The frontal sinuses are present in the forehead and the sphenoid sinuses located under the brain.

What is sinusitis?

Infection of the sinuses is called sinusitis. This can result in a number of symptoms including congestion of the nose, catarrh, decreased sense of smell and pain across the face. Chronic sinusitis is presents when the symptoms stay for 3 months or longer. The treatment usually includes antibiotics and steroid sprays or drops for the nose. Your doctor will have recommended functional endoscopic sinus surgery (FESS) because the medical treatment alone was not effective. After listing you for surgery, your surgeon will arrange for you to have a computerised scan (CT scan). This is used as a map of your sinuses during your operation.

What about the anaesthetic?

Your surgery will usually be carried out under general anaesthesia (you will be asleep during the operation). You will be asked to stop eating and drinking from midnight on the day of your operation. If your operation is in the afternoon, and after checking with your anaesthetist on the morning of your operation, you may be allowed to drink water till a time specified by your anaesthetist.

What does your operation involve?



Functional Endoscopic Sinus Surgery (FESS) is surgery carried out using a fine telescope through the inside of the nose. The narrow channels that drain the sinuses into the nose are unblocked. This allows the infection in the sinuses to clear. The surgeon may use a nasal dressing (pack) at the end of the surgery.

What happens after your operation?

You will be required to stay overnight on the ward. You will be seen by your consultant's team the next morning and if you had a nasal pack this will be removed by one of the nurses. You may have slight bleeding after

removal of the nasal packs. You will be advised to stay in bed for 2-3 hours after removal of the packs. You will usually be able to go home on the day of your surgery. You may be given medication to take home. Please follow the written instructions on the medication pack. Your nurse will explain this to you and give you advice on what to do and what to avoid for the first few weeks after the surgery. Your surgeon may arrange to see you in clinic within the first few weeks following your operation.

Do you need to take time off?

Patients are usually advised to take 2 weeks of rest following their operation. How long will you stay in hospital? You will usually be discharged from hospital the day following the surgery.

Can there be problems?

1. Bleeding of any significant amount is uncommon though a small amount of bleeding may occur with removal of the nasal packs
2. The nose may feel blocked for a while following the surgery. This is caused by a swelling in the lining of the nose and crusts blocking the nasal passages. This usually improves in a few weeks time. Your doctor may give you medical treatment for a period of time following your operation.
3. The sinuses are very close to the eye. Very rarely, damage to the eye may occur caused by bleeding into the eye socket (orbit) or damage to the muscles that move the eye. This can affect the vision but the chances of this happening are very low.
4. The sinuses are very close to the bone at the base of the brain. Operations on the sinuses carry a small risk of leakage of the fluid from the space around the brain. If this rare complication happens, you will need to stay in hospital until the leak stops and another operation to stop the leak may be needed.