

NASAL POLYPECTOMY

What are Nasal Polyps?

Nasal polyps are formed when parts of the lining (mucosa) of the nose and sinuses swell. They look like a bunch of grapes. Most nasal polyps are caused by an inflammation and irritation of the lining of the nose and sinuses.

Nasal polyps can block the narrow channels through which the sinuses drain into the nose leading to an inflammation of the sinuses (sinusitis). When large, nasal polyps can block the nasal passages. This makes breathing through the nose more difficult and can affect the sense of smell.



A nasal polyp in the left side of the nose

What is the treatment for nasal polyps?

Medical treatment in the form of steroid drops or sprays for the nose are usually tried first. This can shrink the polyps and improve the symptoms without the need for an operation. If the medical treatment has not helped with the symptoms then an operation is required to remove the polyps (nasal polypectomy)

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 my operation involve?

The surgery is carried out from the inside of the nose. The surgeon usually performs the operation using a fine telescope. The polyps are removed to improve the breathing through the nose and unblock the narrow channels that drain the sinuses into the nose.

Your doctor may use a nasal dressing (pack) after the end of your operation to avoid a nose bleed.

What happens after my 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 following 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 an advice sheet on what to do and what to avoid for the first few weeks after the operation. Your surgeon may arrange to see you in clinic 6-12 weeks following your operation.

Do I need to take time off?

Patients are usually advised to take 2 weeks of rest following their operation

Can there be problems?

- Bleeding of any significant amount is uncommon though a small amount of bleeding may occur with removal of the nasal packs
- Nasal polyps have a tendency to recur (come back).
- 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.
- The nose and sinuses are very close to the bone of the base of the brain. Rarely, a leak of the fluid from the spaces around the brain may occur after removal of a polyp. In the unlikely event of this happening, you will need to stay in hospital till the leak stops. A second operation to stop the leak may be needed.
- The nose and sinuses are very close to the eye socket. Very rarely bleeding into the eye socket may occur. This may affect vision but the chances of this happening are very low.