

INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING SINUS SURGERY  
CALIFORNIA SINUS INSTITUTE

**Overview**

The sinuses are air-filled holes in the skull. They are connected to the nose and can get infected leading to drainage, pain, etc. This may be caused by allergies, polyps, abnormal shape or swelling inside the nose.

Medical therapies, such as antibiotics, steroids, nasal sprays and decongestants, will often cure bouts of sinusitis. Sinus surgery is advocated in those patients who fail to improve after medicines.

There are circumstances when immediate sinus surgery is warranted. Tumors of the sinuses, whether benign or malignant, often require surgical removal. Surgery may be the only option for some patients whose sinus condition aggravates other medical problems such as asthma. Cancer or immunocompromised patients may require drainage for culture or for treatment of a fungal infection.

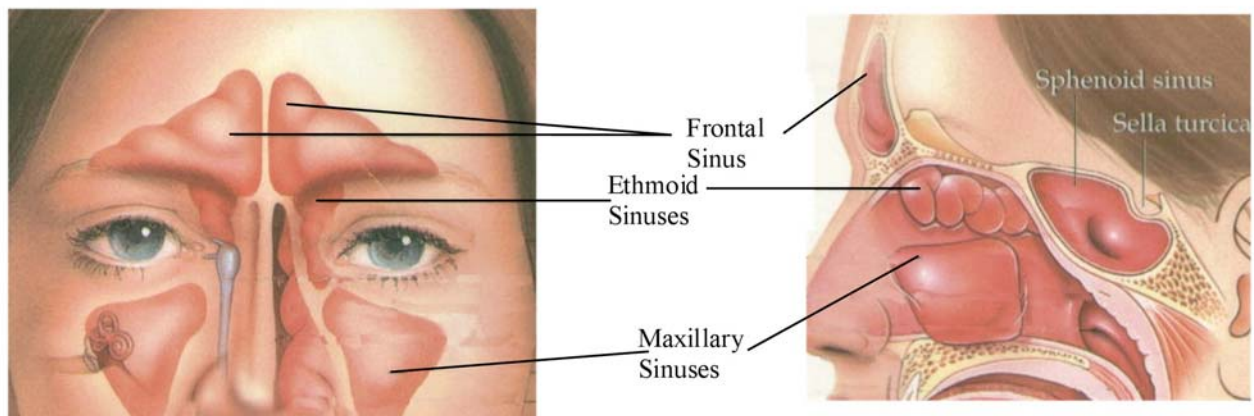
In the past, surgeries requiring an incision under the lip (Caldwell-Luc) or face (external ethmoidectomy) were used to drain sinus cavities. Most procedures are now performed using endoscopic technology (small cameras through the nose), eliminating the need for external incisions.

**Endoscopic Sinus Surgery**

Small rods of light with a camera (endoscope) are used to operate through your nostrils into the sinuses. This does not involve any cuts on your face, but may be combined with other external approaches, which may involve cuts. This surgery is usually done under general anesthesia for your comfort. A CT scan will serve as a road map for your surgeon — please bring it with you to the clinic or operating room.

Endoscopic sinus surgery has ushered in a new philosophy allowing the surgeon to target the ostiomeatal complex (OMC), an area in the anterior ethmoid sinus region. Obstruction of the OMC can lead to subsequent infection of the maxillary, frontal and sphenoid sinuses. Accordingly, endoscopic sinus surgery removes thickened and diseased tissue blocking the OMC. Most of the healthy tissue in the sinuses is undisturbed allowing for faster and better overall recovery.

Endoscopic surgery can also be utilized for removal of polyps, nasal masses and sometimes straightening the septum to improve nasal airflow.



**Following Endoscopic Sinus Surgery**

The procedure generally lasts from one to three hours. You can expect to go home after the procedure unless other medical conditions complicate recovery.

Your nose may or may not have packing in place after the procedure. This packing is often removed 3-5 days after surgery, at your next scheduled office visit. Full recovery may take several weeks. Dry blood, mucus and crusting in the nose will occur, and may result in symptoms like a severe cold or sinus infection. It is important to begin nasal irrigations with distilled water starting the day after surgery. You will be given a rinse bottle. Fill with *distilled water* and *salt/baking soda* packet, and gently flush out each side of your nose *twice a day* starting the day after surgery. This will help clean the clots from your nose, and prevent scarring after surgery. Proper post-operative care is essential to prevent scar formation and allow normal healing. This requires regular visits back to your surgeon for endoscopic cleaning. Generally speaking, your first visit back is the most difficult, and you may need someone with you to drive home after the visit.

### THINGS TO DO

- Take pain medicines as prescribed, including Tylenol: \_\_\_\_\_
- Take antibiotics, if prescribed: \_\_\_\_\_
- Take sleeping medication if needed: Ambien 10 mg—One pill before bedtime as needed
- Call the CSI Office clinic (650-462-3131 in Palo Alto, 925-807-1131 in San Ramon) to make your next post-operative appointment. Your next appointment is:  
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- Start your nasal irrigations the day after surgery
- Sneeze or cough with your mouth open
- Eat a regular diet
- Take your pain medicines before your first post-operative visit

### THINGS NOT TO DO

- Any heavy activity including lifting children and exercise for 1 week
- Blow your nose or pick at your nose
- Take aspirin or aspirin containing medicines, Advil, Motrin or any other NSAIDS
- Fly without your doctor's clearance for 3-5 days after surgery

Call the ON Call Doctor Immediately if any of the following occur:

1. Change in vision
2. Increased swelling around the eyes
3. Neck stiffness or deep head pain
4. Continued Nausea or Vomiting
5. Bright red blood that lasts more than ten minutes or causes choking
6. Fever over 101 degrees

### Telephone Numbers and Other Contact Information:

CSI clinic/scheduling/answering service

Dr. Winston Vaughan's Emergency Cellular Phone:

Dr. Roy Thomas' Emergency Cellular Phone:

Dr. Vaughan's email

Dr. Thomas' email

Kathleen Low, N.P.'s e-mail

Website with map and more patient information

Palo Alto 650-462-3131

San Ramon 925-807-1131

415-640-3808

253-230-0583

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