Further information

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Trimming of inferior turbinate surgery

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What are the inferior turbinates?

Turbinates are soft pieces of tissue inside the nose. Their function is to warm and moisten the air that passes through the nose when breathing. The turbinates can become enlarged due to allergy or infection which causes obstruction of the nose.

Your surgeon has recommended the above procedure. You may have already tried medical treatment such as nasal steroid drops/sprays with limited effect.

Benefits of having the turbinates trimmed

This operation is performed to improve the nasal airway so that you will be able to breathe through your nose more easily. This may be performed in combination with other procedures.

Risks of having the turbinates trimmed

There is a small risk of complications or side-effects, as with any operation, most commonly:

- Bleeding from the nose (epistaxis). This may occur immediately after the operation or sometimes several days later.
- Adhesions (small areas of scar tissue) – occasionally adhesions can develop between the walls of the inside of the nose, which may require further surgery.

Admission into hospital

This procedure is carried out as a day case and you should be able to go home on the same day. On the day of your operation you will be seen by the anaesthetist and the surgeon who will explain the procedure and ask for your consent.

While you are asleep, the surgeon will move the turbinate bones outwards allowing more space for improved airflow and cauterise the venous spaces that would otherwise cause the turbinate bones to become enlarged.

Post operative care

After the operation you will be monitored to make sure that you are recovering from the anaesthetic and also to identify any potential complications of the surgery, such as bleeding. You may have a pack in your nose, if so this will be removed by the nurse prior to your discharge.

It is normal to have a blood stained discharge from your nose for several days after the procedure. It is important that you DO NOT blow your nose. Gently wipe any discharge from under your nose with a soft tissue.

You may still feel some degree of nasal congestion in the few weeks following the surgery. This is due to inflammation and swelling from the procedure itself and nothing to worry about.

It is important to rinse your nose out regularly for 6 weeks following your surgery, which will be explained to you by the nurse prior to discharge.