

# What Is Sinus Surgery?

## What Are the Sinuses, and What Are the Indications for Surgery?

The sinuses are spaces in your face and head that are filled with air. Sinuses may become blocked due to infection, swelling, or polyps. Blockages may lead to acute or chronic sinusitis (sinus infections). Symptoms may include recurrent infections, pain in the face or head, discharge or drainage from the nose, and/or congestion in the nose. Sinus surgery is usually performed to treat chronic sinusitis.

## Who Benefits Most From Sinus Surgery?

If you think you may benefit from sinus surgery, you should see an ear, nose, and throat (ENT) surgeon. The ENT surgeon will look in your nose with a camera and a computed tomographic (CT) scan. The surgeon may recommend sinus surgery if you have sinusitis that is not improving with medications. Nasal saline rinses can be quite helpful before and after surgery. Medications to be tried before surgery include nasal steroid sprays, oral antibiotics, oral steroids, oral antihistamines, and oral decongestants. Sinus surgery is usually elective and is performed to improve your quality of life.

The goal of surgery is to remove blockages and infection in the sinuses. In most cases, it is recommended to use medications to treat sinus disease after sinus surgery. Sinus surgery helps these medicines get where they need to go in the sinuses and other parts of the nose.

## What to Expect During Sinus Surgery?

Sinus surgery is done under general anesthesia, so you will be completely asleep. On the day of your surgery, you will be taken to the operating room. Once you are asleep, your physician will use a camera and instruments in your nose to remove infection, swelling, bony blockage, or polyps. There will not be any cuts on your face and you will look the same after surgery as you did before. At the end of surgery, your surgeon might put splints or packing in your nose. This holds everything in place while you heal.

## What Are the Risks and Complications of Sinus Surgery?

The risks of sinus surgery are small. Minor complications, such as bleeding, infection, scarring, and pain, occur in about 5 of 100 people. Pain is usually mild and controlled with nonprescription medication. It may be advised to take other medications after surgery, like antibiotics or steroids, which may prevent minor complications.

Major complications are rare. The most common is heavy bleeding from the nose. You might need to go to the emergency department or the operating room to stop the nosebleed. Other such complications include injury to the eye and brain.

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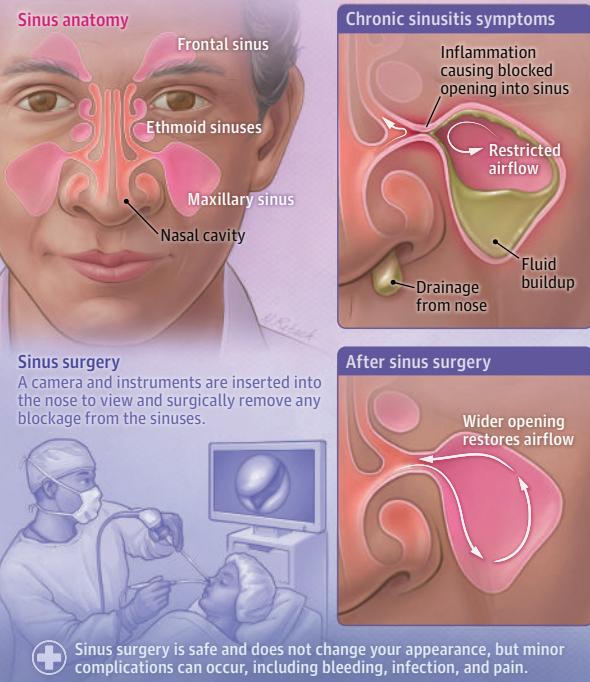
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**Sinuses** are air-filled spaces in your face and head that are continuous with the nasal cavity. Sometimes the sinuses become blocked due to infection, swelling, or polyps, which can lead to chronic sinusitis (sinus infection). A doctor may recommend sinus surgery to clear the blockage.



## What to Expect During Recovery From Sinus Surgery?

Sinus surgery is usually well tolerated and safe. Most patients go home the same day as the surgery. If you have certain medical problems such as heart disease, your surgeon might decide to keep you overnight. Before surgery you should discuss with your surgeon whether you will be going home the same day as surgery or not.

After surgery, your surgeon will want to see you in the office to remove splints, packing, and crusts from your nose. Your surgeon will assess the healing of your sinuses and make treatment recommendations.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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