

### **Post-operative Instructions Following Rhinoplasty**

Early healing of the nose depends upon how well you take care of yourself after surgery. Please review the following instructions before surgery and ask about anything that is not clear.

#### **General:**

Rhinoplasty is performed as an outpatient procedure. If you have other medical conditions such as sleep apnea, you may spend one night in the hospital after your procedure. You will have absorbable sutures placed to close the incisions inside the nose. If an external approach was used, you will have non-absorbable sutures in the columella (skin between the two nostrils) that are removed at the second post-operative visit. The cast over the bridge of your nose should stay in place for one week. Often, internal nasal splints are temporarily placed to help with healing and minimize scar tissue formation. The nose may be congested or obstructed in the first few to several days following rhinoplasty. Mild oozing of blood from the nose is expected in the first 48 hours. **The bridge and tip of the nose will be swollen for a few weeks. After the external approach rhinoplasty, some nasal tip swelling will persist for a full year or longer depending on the thickness of your skin. Bruising over the nasal bridge and under the eyes may occur and usually resolves after 10-14 days, often sooner.**

#### **Before Surgery:**

Three days before surgery begin applying bactroban ointment (mupirocin) inside the nostril twice a day. This ointment will be prescribed by Dr. Zimm.

#### **Swelling:**

Everyone has some swelling after surgery. For some, the swelling is worse than others. Most of the swelling will resolve by the end of the second to third week. The skin of the nose may remain somewhat swollen for several months to a year or longer. It is important to sleep with your head elevated on several pillows at night. Cool compresses applied to the face and especially the eyes will help reduce the swelling more quickly. You should use the cool compresses for as much as possible for the first several days. A good technique is to use a wash cloth dipped in a bucket of ice water. Then squeeze out the excess water and place it over the upper cheeks and cast. **Avoid placing anything frozen directly on the skin.**

**Bruising:**

Bruising is caused by small amounts of blood accumulated under the tissues during surgery. Most of it resolves completely by two to three weeks after surgery. Makeup can help hide the bruises after one week. SINECCH™ (Arnica Montana) will be provided to reduce bruising and swelling.

**Sutures:**

If sutures have been placed in the skin, they are removed between four and seven days after surgery. Clean your nostrils and any sutures at least 3-4 times daily with Hydrogen Peroxide and Q tips. Then apply the Mupirocin ointment (with a Q tip) you were prescribed to moisten the nostrils and the sutures. **Do not insert the Q tips deeply into the nostrils. Do not put ointment on the steri-strips that we have applied.**

**Bleeding:**

Some bloody discharge from your nose is normal. Wear the folded gauze bandage (moustache dressing) below your nose for the first few days to catch any discharge. If the bloody discharge increases, you can spray some Afrin gently in your nose. Call the office immediately if the bleeding is brisk. If you cannot wait for a reply, come to Lenox Hill Emergency room, or to your nearest Emergency Room. Please have the physician there contact Dr. Zimm immediately.

**Weakness:**

After nasal surgery, most people do not feel themselves for several days. Do not be upset by this. Instead, minimize the amount of pain medicine you are taking, get up and move around as much as possible and drink plenty of fluids. Do not expect to be able to catch up on a lot of work while you are recovering. Most people have a hard time concentrating until at least 4 days after surgery.

**Cast:**

If a cast has been placed, it will be removed between six to eight days after surgery. Call Dr. Zimm's office if it falls off early.

**Diet:**

You may have liquids by mouth once you have awakened from anesthesia. If you tolerate the liquids

without significant nausea or vomiting then you may take solid foods but **avoid foods that require a lot of chewing or wide mouth opening**. If nausea is persistent, an anti-nausea medication may be prescribed for you. Some patients experience a mild sore throat for 2-3 days following the procedure. This usually does not interfere with swallowing.

### **Pain control:**

Patients report mild nasal pain, congestion and headache for a few to several days following rhinoplasty. This is usually well controlled with prescription strength oral pain medications (e.g. Vicodin, Tylenol #3). Please take the pain medication prescribed by your surgeon when needed.

**You should avoid non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen (Excedrin, Motrin, Naprosyn, Advil) because these drugs are mild blood thinners and will increase your chances of having a post-operative nose bleed.** Please contact our office (212) 327-4600 if your pain is not controlled with your prescription pain medication.

### **Keep “a Stiff Upper Lip”:**

The upper lip is a key area in nasal surgery so try not to move it too much for the first week after surgery. Avoid excessive talking, smiling, hard to chew food and brushing the teeth too vigorously. Brush your teeth gently with a toothbrush or your finger.

### **Activity:**

**No bending, heavy lifting (over 10lbs), or straining for 2 weeks following the surgery.** You should plan for 1 week away from work. If your job requires manual labor, lifting or straining then you should be out of work for 2 weeks or limited to light duty until the 2 week mark. **Do not blow your nose after the surgery until otherwise instructed by Dr. Zimm. If you have to sneeze, do so with your mouth open.** Walking and other light activities are encouraged after the first 24 hours. You may resume light aerobic exercise 2 weeks after surgery and full workout including weight training 3-4 weeks after surgery.

### **Bathing and showering:**

As soon as you feel well enough, but **keep the cast dry for 6 or 7 days until the morning of your appointment. That morning get the cast wet when you shower.** This will make it easier to

remove your cast in the office.

**Be careful not to bump your nose:**

Beware of restless/playful children, bedmates and pets. Avoid putting any pressure on your nose when you sleep.

**Driving:**

You may drive as soon as the swelling allows for clear vision and you are no longer taking sedating pain medications. You may fly at two to three weeks. Please stay out of the sun and use SPF 30 or higher for at least 6 months. Wear a baseball cap to help protect the nose from sun exposure and trauma.

**Pore strips:**

Pore strips cannot be used until 3 months after surgery.

**Do not smoke for at least 3 weeks before and after surgery. Smoking will increase swelling and delay healing.**

**Nasal care following the surgery:**

Gently apply a layer of antibiotic ointment to the nostrils and any suture lines on the outside of the nose twice daily for the first week. Hot steam showers as needed are very helpful in relieving nasal congestion and crusting. Try to keep the nasal cast dry. Hair can be washed with the head tilted back in the shower or over the sink. Sleep with the head elevated for the first two weeks; this will minimize pain and congestion. You may use two pillows to do this or sleep in a reclining chair. Dr. Zimm may have you spray your nose with decongestant spray (Afrin or neosynepherine) as needed for persistent nasal congestion and oozing.

**Do not wear eyeglasses after the cast comes off for 6 weeks after surgery** due to the incisions in the bones of your nasal bridge. If you must wear eyeglasses, ask us about methods to support them off your nose.

### **Medical Supplements/Medications:**

Dr. Zimm may have you take several vitamins prior to surgery. These items may lower your risk of bruising and bleeding:

- 1) Arnica-Montana tablets (SINECCH™) as directed.
- 2) Take Vitamin C 1000mg to promote healing for one week before surgery and two weeks after.
- 3) Pain medication as prescribed by Dr. Zimm.
- 4) Antibiotics (usually for 7 days) as prescribed by Dr. Zimm.

### **Follow-up appointments:**

Your follow up appointments in the office will be **days 1, 4, and 7** following your surgery. These visits should be scheduled prior to your surgery (at the time of your pre-operative visit). If you do not have these appointments made, please contact our office when you arrive home from the surgery center.

### **Please call our office immediately if you experience:**

- \*Brisk nose bleeding**
- \*Fever greater than 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit**
- \*Purulent discharge (pus) coming from the nose**
- \*Severe nasal pain or headache**