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Information on Endoscopic Sinus Surgery

What do I need to know before having endoscopic sinus surgery?

1. Preoperative prescriptions: Prior to surgery your doctor will most likely prescribe several medications including a narcotic pain medicine, oral steroids, and antibiotics. These help to optimize the surgery, decrease the risk of infection, and keep you comfortable after the surgery. It is important to follow your doctor's instructions and start the medications at the appropriate times before and after the surgery.
2. Recommended over-the-counter medications: We recommend that you purchase two over-the-counter medications prior to your surgery. Nasal saline mist (Ayr, Ocean, Simple Saline) can be used every 3-4 hours after surgery to keep your nose moist and humidified. Afrin should be used after surgery if you have steady bleeding that doesn't stop with a gentle head tilt. Both of these medications can be purchased at any pharmacy without a prescription and are good to have for after your surgery.
3. Preoperative physical: Your surgeon will require you to get medical clearance from your primary care physician before surgery. This will require a note from your doctor and in some cases a brief physical examination. Your Johns Hopkins surgeon will order basic lab tests and studies and your primary care doctor may want additional tests. This ensures that you have medical clearance for a safe surgery.
4. Smoking: Smoking can severely affect the outcome of your sinus surgery. Smoking causes increased scar tissue and poor healing that leads to failure of endoscopic sinus surgery. If you do smoke your surgeon will usually require you to stop smoking 3-4 weeks before surgery and avoid smoking for an additional month after surgery.
5. What to avoid before surgery: **There are certain medications that can increase your risk of bleeding during and after sinus surgery. These medications include aspirin and NSAIDs such as Advil, Motrin, and Aleve. These should be stopped at least 2 weeks prior to surgery. Vitamins E and herbal medicines such as ginkgo biloba, ginseng, fish oil and garlic tablets can also increase your risk of bleeding and should be stopped 2 weeks prior to surgery. St. John's Wort is a medication that should be avoided 2 weeks before surgery as it may interact with anesthesia. Anti-coagulation medicines such as Coumadin and Plavix are blood thinning medications that must also be temporarily stopped before and after surgery.**

What can I expect on my surgery day?

1. You will not be allowed to eat or drink anything after midnight before your day of surgery. Your doctor will tell you which medications you can take the morning of the surgery, but these should be taken with very small sips of water. This is extremely important to understand because the anesthesiologists can not put you to sleep safely unless you have an empty stomach, and therefore they will cancel surgery if you've had anything to eat or drink.
2. Sinus surgery is performed with general anesthesia so you will be asleep during your procedure. After surgery you will spend a few hours in a recovery room to allow you to wake up. Most patients feel good enough to go home a few hours after their surgery.
3. Please see the Postoperative Care Instructions packet for information about after your surgery.