



Post-FESS Recovery Tips from one patient to another



Preparing for surgery

- Set up a bin beside your bed to hold useful items (lip balm, telephone, pain meds, TV remote) and one in the bathroom (gauze pads, paper tape, nasal irrigation bottle, Polysporin, Q-tips).
- Pile several pillows on your bed before you leave for the hospital so you can rest/sleep as upright as possible. Use old pillowcases to protect pillows from being soiled. You may want to use a neck pillow or Boppy for support.
- Avoid bending over as it can cause pressure/pain/bleeding, so leave some extra pajamas and comfy outfits on top of your dresser. Do the same with extra toilet paper in the bathroom or anything you might have to bend low to reach.
- Stock up on Popsicles, applesauce and soup as your stomach will be off for a bit due to pain meds + swallowing blood and mucus + anesthesia.
- Arrange to take adequate time off work, being sure to give yourself enough time to recover. FESS is major surgery and you will need rest. General anesthesia alone can take a lot out of you. It is not unusual to need one, two or even three weeks away from work, depending on your job.
- If you have children, have someone look after them overnight for a few days.
- Ask someone to drive you to the hospital and home afterward. Remember you will not be able to drive after surgery and while you are taking narcotic pain medications. Be sure to stock up on food and meals.

The day of your surgery

- Bring lip balm to the hospital. Your lips may become dry and cracked during surgery.
- Wear a zippered or buttoned shirt so you don't have to pull your shirt over your head when you dress to leave (do pack an overnight bag just in case).
- General anesthesia can cause nausea and vomiting. If you feel nauseous, tell your recovery nurse IMMEDIATELY. They can administer medication that works very quickly.
- Pain medication should keep you comfortable while in recovery. If you are in pain, let your nurse know as there is no need to suffer.

This advice does not take the place of guidance from a qualified physician

We wish you a speedy and full recovery!

You can find further information and support through the The Samter's Society patient group on [Facebook](#) or on our website at www.samterssociety.org



Recovering at home

- You will need to wear gauze pads to absorb blood/discharge from your nose. You can cut the top and bottom strips off of a surgical mask, leaving the elastic loops attached. Tuck a folded gauze pad under your nose and hold it in place using the mask. Alternately, you may use paper tape to secure the gauze pad. Place a piece of tape on each cheek that you will not remove each time - attach another piece of tape to that to hold the gauze. Removing tape over and over again can be painful.
- In the first few days, take the strong pain meds prescribed to you (i.e. opioids) as needed. Stop taking them as soon as you can as their side effects can make you feel worse the longer you take them. Extra-strength Tylenol can be very effective after the worst has passed.
- It is OK to shower as soon as you feel well enough. You may have some dried blood to wash away and your neck may feel stiff or sore from having your head propped up during surgery. This is normal and should resolve quickly.
- Resist the temptation to blow your nose in the first week post-op (try a nose rinse). If it happens accidentally, don't panic if you cause swelling. It will go down quickly. If something worsens, call your doctor's office.
- Avoid sneezing out of your nose, instead open your mouth when you sneeze.
- The skin around the outside your nostrils may become dry. You can apply a little Polysporin or Vaseline with a clean Q-tip to the outer part of your nose.
- If the air in your home is very dry, a cool mist humidifier may provide some comfort. A cool pack can help soothe any discomfort.
- Stay hydrated. In addition to keeping your sinuses moist, you need to flush all the meds out of your body. Water or apple juice can also help with constipation from pain meds (you may need a stool softener if it persists).
- If your surgeon used packing, it will likely feel uncomfortable and having it removed can be painful. Take pain meds before going to your appointment to have it removed. Ask someone to drive you home afterward.
- You may not feel well enough to drive at all during the first week post-op. Take it slowly.
- Regular sinus irrigation will help speed healing. Instructions for irrigation vary from one surgeon to the next, so questions about this are best directed to your doctor.
- Pain, swelling and minor bleeding/discharge are typical following FESS. Expect some pain and pressure into the second week post-surgery.
- If you experience severe bleeding or headache, or gushes of clear liquid from your nose, contact your surgeon or seek emergency medical assistance immediately.
Note: Patients will generally have headache from anesthesia and surgery, this does not always need emergency care.
- Check with your doctor when you can resume physical activity and strenuous activity. When allowed, begin slowly and pay attention to your body. You will need to work up to your previous activity level.
- It can take months to recover fully from major surgery. Be patient with yourself as you experience ups and downs in your healing.



NOTE: Always call your doctor/surgeon's office with any concerns (stint coming out, excessive bleeding, etc.).