



CARE INSTRUCTIONS

KAISER PERMANENTE

Nasal Septum Repair: Before Your Surgery

Your Kaiser Permanente Care Instructions

Nasal septum repair is surgery to fix the wall of cartilage inside your nose that divides your nostrils. The surgery is called septoplasty.

Doctors usually do the surgery through the inside of the nose. In most cases, no cut is made on the outside of the nose. The doctor will cut the outer layer (mucous membrane) that lines your nose and lift it away from the cartilage wall. The cartilage will be reshaped or moved, or both. The mucous membrane will then be put back in place. You may have splints and packing inside and outside the nose to hold the septum in place while it heals.

Most people go home a few hours after surgery. You will probably be able to return to work or school in about 1 week and to your normal routine in about 3 weeks. However, this varies with your job and the extent of your surgery. It will probably take 1 to 2 months before you feel completely normal again.

You will have to visit your doctor or other health care professional after your surgery. Your doctor or other health care professional will check to see that your nose is healing well.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. As a partner in your health care, you can do things like keep all scheduled visits, be sure you know the results of all tests and labs ordered as part of your care, and keep an up-to-date personal list of the medicines you are taking. Know how to contact us between visits, and call your doctor or other health care professional if you have signs that you are having problems.

What happens before surgery?

Having surgery can be stressful. This information will help you understand what you can expect and how to safely prepare for surgery.

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Preparing for surgery

- Bring a list of questions to ask your doctors. It is important that you understand exactly what surgery is planned, the risks, benefits, and other options before your surgery.
- Tell your doctors ALL the medicines, vitamins, supplements, or herbal remedies you are taking. Keep a list of these with you, and bring this with you to every appointment. You will be told which medicine to take or to stop before your surgery.
- Some medicines, such as aspirin or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), and certain vitamins and herbal remedies can increase the risk of bleeding or interact with anesthesia. You may be asked to stop these a week before surgery.
- Before your surgery, you will speak with an anesthesia provider to discuss your anesthetic options, including the risks, benefits, and alternatives to each. This may be on the phone or in person.
- Most adults will be told to stop eating at least 8 hours before surgery. You will be given exact instructions for your surgery.

Taking care of yourself before surgery

- Build healthy habits into your life. Changes are best made several weeks before surgery, since your body may react to sudden changes in your habits.
 - Stay as active as you can.
 - Eat a healthy diet.
 - Cut back or quit alcohol and tobacco.
- Relaxation exercises and guided imagery help reduce stress and may speed your recovery. *Preparing for Successful Surgery: A Program of Guided Imagery, Relaxation, and Music* is an excellent audio program. You can listen to or download it at www.kp.org/listen. You may also order a copy at www.kpwellness.org.
- We recommend that everyone have a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care (living will). This is to be sure your doctors and loved ones will know your wishes, if you are ever too ill to speak for yourself. You will be asked about this when you come in for surgery. Forms and more information are available from your doctor or the Health Education Department.
- See your Health Education Department or the Healthy Living Link at members.kp.org for much more information on good health habits and staying well.

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What happens on the day of surgery?

- Follow the instructions exactly about when to stop eating and drinking, or your surgery may be canceled. If your doctor has instructed you to take your medicines on the day of surgery, please do so using only a sip of water.
- Take a bath or shower before you come in for your surgery. Do not apply lotions, perfumes, deodorants, or nail polish.
- Remove all jewelry, piercings, and contact lenses.
- Leave your valuables at home.

At the hospital or surgery center

- You will be asked for a picture ID and your Health Plan Card when you arrive.
- Before surgery you will be asked to repeat your full name, what surgery you are having, and what part of your body is being operated on.
- A small tube (IV) will be placed in a vein, to give you fluids and medicine to help you relax. Because of the combination of medicines given to keep you comfortable, you may not remember much about the operating room.
- You will be kept comfortable and safe by your anesthesia provider. The anesthesia may range from making you fully asleep, to simply numbing the area being worked on. This will depend on the procedure you are having, as well as a discussion between your surgeon, the anesthesia provider, and you.
- The surgery will take 1 to 2 hours.
- As you wake up in the recovery room, the nurse will check to be sure you are stable and comfortable. It is important for you to tell us how you feel and ask questions about any concerns you may have.

Going home

- Be sure you have someone to drive you home.
- For your safety, you should not drive until you are no longer taking pain medicines, and you can move and react easily.
- Arrange for extra help at home after surgery, especially if you live alone or provide care for another person.

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- You will be given more specific instructions about recovering from your surgery, including activity and when you may return to work.

When should you call your doctor or other health care professional?

- You have questions or concerns.
- You do not understand how to prepare for your surgery.
- You become ill before surgery (such as fever, cold or flu, chest pain, or shortness of breath).
- You need to reschedule or have changed your mind about having the surgery.

How can you learn more about nasal septum repair?

- *Log on:* members.kp.org. Search for **septum repair** in the **Health encyclopedia**, or look in the **Surgery** featured health topic.

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