

Turbinate Reduction Surgery

An information guide



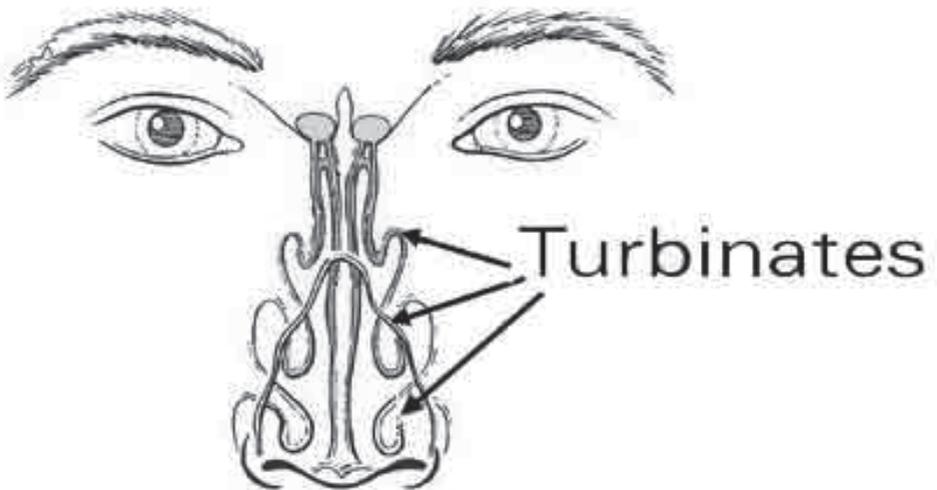
Turbinate Reduction Surgery

What are the Turbinates?

The nose acts like a humidifier and filter providing moist, warm and clean air for the lungs.

To help do this, the side walls of the nose contain bony outgrowths lined with mucosa (like the rest of the nose) called turbinates that form fleshy folds.

These can become enlarged and inflamed acutely or chronically, a condition called rhinitis (inflammation of the nasal lining). When they become enlarged, they can cause a blocked nose and if inflamed they can cause mucus production and nasal drip.



Front view

Why do I need turbinate reduction surgery?

Rhinitis is essentially a medical condition treated with nasal sprays.

If you have already tried sprays and had minimal benefit then your doctor may recommend turbinate surgery with the aim of reducing the size of the biggest (inferior) turbinates.

In doing so, the aim is to create more space so that future application of nasal sprays distributes more evenly in the nose and thus improve airflow through your nose.

The alternative is to continue with conservative treatment and not have the surgery.

What is turbinate reduction?

If the fleshy turbinates are too big then they can be either partially removed (Turbinoplasty or Turbinectomy) or broken and pushed out of the way (Outfracture) or the lining can be reduced with electric cauterly (SMD).

Turbinate reduction is a routine day case procedure done under general anaesthetic. The operation is performed inside the nose with no external incisions.

Rarely, you may have packing inserted in your nose after the operation, if this is the case it will be removed before you go home.

What happens after the operation?

Most patients will go home on the same day as their surgery.

Your nose may feel quite blocked up after the operation, this is quite normal and will take a few days, sometimes even a couple of weeks, to settle.

How long will I be off work?

Most people will need 3-4 days off work after the operation; some will be able to return to work sooner.

What are the risks of surgery?

Overall, these operations are safe in most people. Your risk depends somewhat on any other medical problems you may have.

Some of these risks are very rare, but serious. Some are more common but less troublesome.

Firstly, you will have a general anaesthetic (you will be asleep for the operation). You will have a chance to discuss this with the anaesthetist (the doctor who will put you to sleep) before your surgery.

Common Risks

Nasal Obstruction:

You will probably have dry blood and crusting causing a blocked nose for the first few weeks.

Bleeding:

A small amount of bleeding after surgery is quite common. Very occasionally patients may need to have their nose packed. You may notice some blood when you blow your nose for a few weeks after the operation.

Occasional risks

Discomfort:

It can sometimes be a bit uncomfortable after the operation for a few days.

Infection:

Occasionally the nose can get infected after surgery which may cause pain and a smelly discharge requiring antibiotics.

Return of symptoms:

Although your symptoms may initially improve this may not be permanent requiring continuing or further treatment.

Failure of treatment:

Occasionally, you may find that there is no significant improvement in your symptoms following the operation. Commonly you will need to use the nasal spray treatment long term to get maximum benefit as the surgery does not cure the underlying chronic rhinitis that exists.

Notes:

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