



FOREHEAD FLAP INSTRUCTIONS

What to obtain before surgery:

- Aquaphor® or Vaseline®
- Non-adherent gauze pads (10 – 20)
- Paper tape
- Q-tips®
- Hydrogen Peroxide 3%
- Ice Packs (lightweight gel type)

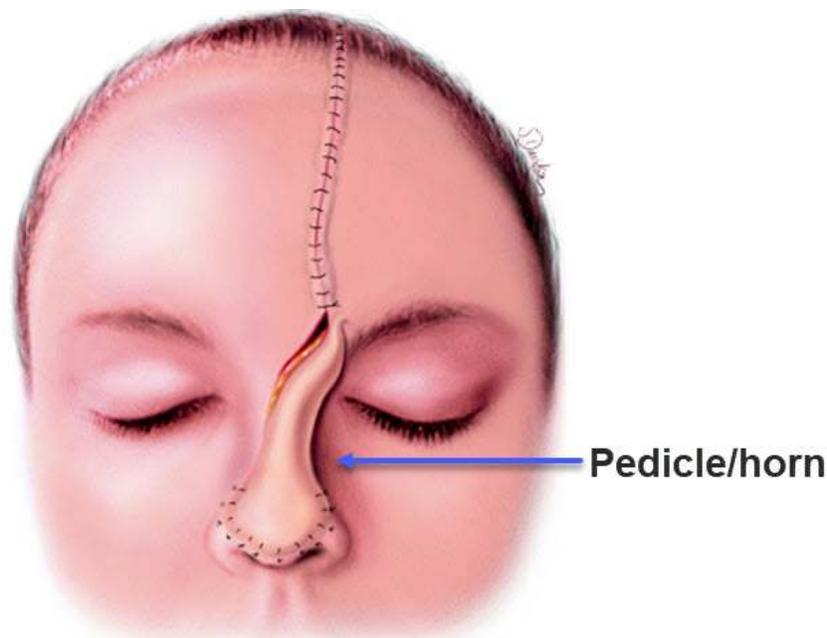
How to prepare for surgery:

- Stop smoking cigarettes 6 weeks before surgery (and never start again!)
- Stop chewing tobacco 4 weeks before surgery (and never start again!).
- No alcohol 24 hours before surgery.
- Nothing to eat after midnight the night before surgery.
- Mentally prepare: It's **normal** to be nervous, and we know this is a difficult and awkward process to endure. Remember to focus on the “long game.” The “weird” appearance and temporary inconvenience will be worth the long-term results of a normal-looking nose.

What happens during surgery:

A **forehead flap** is a surgical technique used to reconstruct large or complex defects on the nose. Skin, fat, veins, and arteries are taken from the forehead to replace missing nasal skin. This requires **at least two** surgeries, although in certain situations it may require **three or more** surgeries. Surgeries are spaced 3-4 weeks apart to allow your body to re-establish a blood supply to the part of the flap that will be attached to your nose after the second surgery.

More often than not, additional minor "touch-up" procedures may be necessary to improve your final outcome. These could include steroid injections, "dermabrasion" to smoothen skin edges or contouring procedure most of which are done in the clinic.



Republished with permission of Springer, from Principles of Nasal Reconstruction, Baker, Shan R., ed. 2, 2011; Permission conveyed through Copyright Clearance Center, Inc.

What is a pedicle?

The pedicle is the forehead skin that is cut and rotated down to cover the hole in the nose. It contains a major artery which keeps the skin alive. Under the pedicle, you will have a raw side which is left open and is covered gently wrapped with a yellow dressing. This exposed raw tissue will commonly turn yellow. This concerns some people as it may look infected. True infection in forehead flaps is VERY rare (<3%). In such cases, the skin turns red, painful and drains foul-smelling pus. Over the three weeks, the pedicle can "shrink" and sometimes feels tight. The pedicle will make it difficult for you to wear your glasses, so you may need to suspend them with a device.

Wound Care

Day 1 after surgery

- 24 hours after surgery, you may shower in warm (not steaming) water.

Day 1, 2 and 3 after surgery:

- Clean the suture lines with a 50/50 mix of hydrogen peroxide and water on Q-tips® using a rolling motion to remove crusts. Ideally, do this three times a day. Then apply a thin layer of Aquaphor.
- Keep the incisions open to air while you are home but make sure they are kept moist with ointment. **Do not let the stitches dry out.** If you leave the house, you can cover the wounds with a non-adherent gauze pad secured with paper tape.
- Use ice packs on the eyes and forehead to decrease swelling. You can put ice packs on either side of the nose; but **do not place directly on the flap.**
- Sleep in a recliner or with your head elevated on two pillows.

Day 4,5 and 6 after surgery:

- Gently clean the area with water and a mild soap such as Dove® or Cetaphil® three times per day. Then apply a thin layer of Aquaphor followed by a non-adherent gauze and tape if desired.

Recovery

Home assistance:

- Have someone drive you home from surgery and help you at home for a day or 2.
- Ask for help if you need it!

Activity:

- Depending upon how complex your defect is, surgery can be quite long -- Get lots of rest
- You can resume light activities 24 hours after surgery.
- Keeping your head elevated for the first 2 nights after surgery (propped up on 2-3 pillows or by sleeping in a recliner).

Diet:

- Sometimes, the forehead tightness can make you feel a bit nauseated.
- Decreased activity may cause constipation, so add additional raw fruit to your diet.
- Drink plenty of fluid. You should be urinating every 6 - 8 hours at least

Medication:

- If you need to, take pain medication as prescribed.
- **Do not drink alcohol when taking pain medications.**
- Alcohol can worsen fluid buildup in the body, so try to avoid it for 3 weeks after surgery.
- If you are taking vitamins with iron, resume these supplements as tolerated.
- Do not smoke. Smoking delays healing and increases the risk of complications.

What is it supposed to look like?

- You can expect bruising and swelling to peak 48 – 72 hours after surgery, and it will gradually decrease over a week or so..
- Drainage and mild bleeding from the flap during the first days after surgery is common.
- If you have fresh, red blood that soaks a gauze dressing **more often than one pad every 10-20 minutes**, please contact the clinic.
- Forehead tightness and headaches are common for the first couple weeks after the procedure.
- Tingling, numbness, discoloration and itching in some areas and light redness around the incisions are normal side effects and will resolve with full healing.

If any issues arise, please contact the office and (314) 965-9184.