



Turbinate Cautery

This is an operation performed in kids, often in conjunction with an adenoidectomy, to treat a chronically blocked and or runny nose due to allergic or non allergic rhinitis which is refractory to treatment with nasal corticosteroid sprays. The inferior turbinate is a pad of erectile tissue which swells and secretes mucous and contributes significantly to nasal blockage in patients with rhinitis (inflamed/irritable nose). Turbinate cautery scarifies the front third of this structure using a diathermy needle, thus preventing it from subsequently swelling to a degree that it can obstruct the nose. This is a procedure performed in kids, whereas adult with the same issue will usually undergo turbinoplasty whereby the turbinate is partially removed (a more robust treatment, but not doable in children).

The Recovery

A turbinoplasty is not a particularly painful procedure, and the biggest challenge for the recovery is having a very congested nose for 2 weeks which will discharge a little blood stained mucous. Please use a regular saline spray 3 times a day for up to 4 weeks while the area is healing to prevent crusts or infection forming. Please discourage nose picking. Gentle blowing of the nose is fine. I advise 3days off school and can provide you with a medical certificate if requested.

Improvement in nasal flow occurs from 2-6 weeks, and at the 6week mark the nose will be healed. It is at this point you can make a judgement as to whether the surgery has improved the breathing.

Post Op Diet

There are no dietary restrictions or modifications required. Please try to keep your child well hydrated.

Post Op Medications

Paracetamol and/or neurofen are usually all that is required. Please use the nasal spray at least twice and ideally 3 times a day for 4 weeks.

Post Op appointment.

A post op review should be scheduled about 6 weeks after the surgery. My secretary will try to allocate a review appointment to you before you have your procedure. Please call my rooms to arrange this if this has been omitted.

What can go wrong?

The surgery is safe and usually uncomplicated.

General complications:

Nausea, vomiting, sore throat and drowsiness may occur as a result of the anaesthetic. Serious drug reactions are very rare.

Specific problems:

- Bleeding - everyone will have a little blood stained mucous. For turbinate cautery it is rare to have any major bleeding although this can occur.
- If mild - decongestant nasal spray like otrivine/ drixine/ sinex/spraytish twice daily can help.
- If moderate - please call me - I may need to see your child and consider inserting some packing material in my office or in the emergency department.
- If severe (v rare) - please attend the Emergency Dept at St John of God.

Scarring

Rarely a web of scar tissue can develop between the septum and the turbinate - called an adhesion. I will check for this at the post op appointment and intervene if needed.