

Balloon Sinus Dilation Procedure

Information Sheet

A Quick Overview of the Sinuses

Before we take a more in-depth look at balloon sinus dilation, let's explore the sinuses. Your sinuses are spaces in your skull that are filled with air and lined with mucous membranes. Each person has four sets of sinuses:

- **Frontal sinuses** behind the forehead.
- **Maxillary sinuses** behind the cheeks.
- **Ethmoid sinuses** between the eyes.
- **Sphenoid sinuses** behind the nose.

Your sinuses help lighten your skull and allow your voice to reverberate. They also produce mucus that lubricates the inside of your nose.

Although the sinuses are usually air filled, they can become blocked under a number of conditions. When mucus can't drain out of the sinuses well, it accumulates in these normally open cavities instead. This moist environment is not only uncomfortable, but it can also lead to the growth of bacteria that results in a sinus infection.

Some people deal with chronic inflammation from environmental allergies, excessive mucus, or nasal polyps that stop up the sinuses. Other people are born with narrow sinuses, which swell closed more easily.

Balloon sinus dilation can help with most of these conditions.

What's Involved in Balloon Sinus Dilation?

Over the past 10 years, balloon sinus dilation has emerged as an excellent alternative to endoscopic sinus surgery.

Endoscopic sinus surgery is a more involved procedure that requires general anesthesia and sometimes the removal of bone and tissue. But time and technology have progressed, and today we usually reserve endoscopic sinus surgery for cases where we need to remove tumors or extensive nasal polyps.

Balloon sinus dilation does not require general anesthesia or a visit to a surgery center. Instead, we perform this procedure in the office with minimal sedation and topical anesthesia. Your nose is numbed so you can't feel the procedure, but you remain awake the entire time.

During the balloon sinus dilation (also called balloon sinuplasty), your ENT physician inserts a small balloon into your nostril using a thin tube with a light and tiny camera attached.

The physician then inflates the balloon to widen your sinus passageway. The balloon stays inflated for about 10 seconds and is then deflated. From beginning to end, the procedure takes about an hour. More than half of that time is spent simply waiting for local anesthesia to take effect and sufficiently numb the nose.

After a short recovery period, the newly widened sinus passages can drain more freely.

Balloon Sinus Dilation Risks and Safety Concerns

As with most medical procedures, patients may have questions and concerns before their balloon sinus dilation. While no procedure is completely without risk, balloon sinus dilation is extremely safe. Because it requires only topical anesthesia and mild sedation, it does not involve the risks associated with general anesthesia. Also, the results of balloon sinus dilation are permanent. It provides long-lasting relief from constricted sinuses.

Why Balloon Sinuplasty?

The sinuses are air-filled pockets within the skull. These pockets need a way to aerate. They do this through small crevices into the nose itself. Patients with chronic sinus problems like infections, pain, pressure, and/or headaches typically have narrowed openings between the sinuses and the nose.

Because these crevices are narrow, they're more easily occluded with any type of allergy or irritation. In order to find relief, they need wider entrances into the sinus cavity. The balloon enlarges these small openings.

How Balloon Sinuplasty Works

This procedure is extremely low-pain because we start by numbing the nose entirely. Once the nose is completely numb, we pass a balloon through the "ostia" (the openings into the sinuses).

We dilate the balloon for about 10 seconds, deflate it, and remove it. During this short period of inflation, the balloon widens the bony entrance from the nose into the sinus cavity.

Each person has six of these openings. We can open all — or whichever the patient needs.

When we dilate the balloon, we actually move these small bones permanently. But it's not as dramatic as it sounds. The bones in your nose aren't what we typically associate with solid bone. Instead, these are paper-thin bones (think fingernails) that move easily.

Additional Procedures

In conjunction with the balloon sinus dilation, additional procedures may be performed. These may include turbinate resection, sinus polyp removal and/or septoplasty. Turbinate resection is the most

common and is recommended when the turbinate, a long narrow bone shelf, protrudes into the nasal passage causing nasal obstruction, mild congestion and/or nasal drainage. This procedure involves the insertion of a small electrical probe into the turbinate.

Any additionally indicated procedures will be discussed in more detail prior to scheduling.

Prior to Procedure

In most cases, this procedure can be performed in office with local anesthesia. You will be given medications (i.e., antibiotics, a topical steroid spray and sometimes steroids by mouth) in the days or weeks prior to surgery. Please bring those medications to your procedure.

For at least five days before this procedure, the patient should refrain from taking aspirin or medications that contain aspirin. Tylenol can be taken if necessary. In addition, if the patient is taking any other medications the doctor should be advised.

The “Day of” Timeline

Before the day of the procedure, we prescribe a pain medication and an anxiolytic (anxiety reducing medication) for the patient to take before their appointment. Patients need someone to drive them to the office and home after the procedure.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM BALLON SINUPLASTY RECOVERY

- Expect about a three-day recovery, with mild lingering symptoms afterwards.
- In three to four days, most patients feel about 80% normal.
- Patients are usually back to 100% within a few weeks.
- Immediately following the procedure, you may experience slight bleeding for up to 12 hours.
- Most patients also experience nasal congestion for about a week as the swelling the cavities subsides.
- Patient care instructions are also rather simple: just avoid strenuous lifting and exercise for about a week.

We start by fully numbing the nose using topical medications, which takes about 30 minutes. After the nose is completely numb, we inject more numbing medication before beginning the sinuplasty. The procedure itself takes 20-30 minutes. During the procedure, the patient may feel slight pressure while the sinuses are dilated but should feel no real discomfort. The patient may also hear some cracking or popping noises as these paper-thin bones are moved.

After we finish, we suction the nose so it's completely clean. The patient can leave immediately afterwards. Patients should expect to be in the office for 1- 1.5 hours for the entire process.

What to Expect: Balloon Sinuplasty Recovery

While recovery is very manageable, there's still a period of healing that must occur following this procedure. Expect about a three-day recovery, with mild lingering symptoms afterwards.

In three to four days, most patients feel about 80% normal. Patients are usually back to 100% within a few weeks. Often, if we do the procedure at the end of the week, you're back to work by Monday.

Immediately following the procedure, patients experience slight bleeding for up to 12 hours. We'll provide guides and care instructions for managing it. Most patients also experience nasal congestion for about a week as the swelling in the cavities subsides. During this time, patients may also feel mild pain, headaches, and pressure in the sinus cavities. Remember, we actually moved bones around and it takes bones six weeks to heal completely. After three to four weeks, patients are almost back to normal, and by six weeks, they're fully recovered.

Patient care instructions are also rather simple during balloon sinuplasty recovery: just avoid strenuous lifting and exercise for about a week. While it wouldn't damage the surgery, it may start a nosebleed if you increase pressure too much. Otherwise, you can follow your normal diet and showering routines.

In the Days/Weeks After Surgery

It is recommended a saline spray (such as Ocean or Ayr) be instilled into the nose multiple times a day to help clear the nose of drainage and old blood as well as keep the nasal cavity hydrated to promote healing. The first post-operative visit will be schedule three to four weeks after the procedure. Further follow-up appointments will be scheduled over the next two to six weeks.

- Antibiotics and other medications prescribed prior to the procedure should be continued as recommended.
- **DO NOT BLOW YOUR NOSE** for 3 days after the procedure, instead just "sniff in." If you accidentally blow your nose or sneeze, you may get some air in your cheeks or face, which will cause some puffiness. This is typically not serious and will resolve in a few days.
- Sleep with your head elevated about the heart to help reduce swelling.
- If you use CPAP, do not use it for at least one week after the procedure.
- DO NOT fly, scuba dive, skydive, parachute or participate in other vigorous physical activity for 2-4 weeks.

Does Balloon Sinuplasty Hurt?

This is a low to no pain procedure for patients. We take about 20-30 minutes to fully numb the patient before we begin. We start with all-topical numbing agents — using both decongestants and anesthetics to thoroughly numb the nose. We then inject a numbing agent into the nose. But by that point, patients feel very little if anything at all.

When we insert the balloon and dilate it, some patients describe the feeling as a slight pressure. Some people feel a release of pressure because the sinuses finally open. Other patients don't feel anything — they don't even flinch.

If you feel pressure, the location depends on which sinus we are dilating. When we dilate the frontal sinus, you may feel pressure near the eye. When we dilate the maxillary/cheek sinus, you'll feel pressure in the upper teeth. When we dilate the sphenoid sinus, sometimes you feel pressure in the back of the head to varying degrees.

Whatever the feeling, it only lasts for about 10 seconds per sinus.

For some, this compares to a dental procedure — you're awake, numb, and maybe a little uncomfortable occasionally, but with the right medication, you don't feel pain.

For most people, their only complaint is they didn't do it sooner.

Does Balloon Sinuplasty Work Effectively?

For the right patient, it works very well. Our job is to make sure you're the best candidate for it. Over 95% of our patients are extremely satisfied with the results. For sinus headaches, pain and pressure in the sinus, and recurrent or chronic sinus infections, this procedure is particularly effective.

Will I Have Pain After Balloon Sinuplasty?

You'll have significantly less pain after balloon sinuplasty than with endoscopic sinus surgery — plus, the recovery time is shorter.

Patients may experience slight pain in the sinuses for several days after this procedure. We prescribe pain medications, but most people don't need them beyond a couple of days. Within four days, most patients feel about 80% back to normal. Full recovery takes up to six weeks.

Will I Have Congestion After Balloon Sinuplasty?

Expect temporary "rebound" congestion for about a week after a balloon sinuplasty as the mucosa (nasal lining) heals. The balloon sinuplasty is only minimally traumatic to the tissue and therefore heals quickly. As the inflammation subsides, so does the congestion.

What is the Balloon Sinuplasty Success Rate?

In our experience of doing hundreds of these procedures, the balloon sinuplasty success rate is extremely high — easily above 95%. Overall, it's an extraordinarily successful procedure.

Cancelation Policy

A \$100 cancellation fee will be assessed if your surgery is canceled or missed (other than at the recommendation of the physician) with less than 48 hours' notice. If you need to cancel or reschedule your procedure please call our office at (806) 791-0188.

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