

ENT12lite Turbinectomy

Expires end of December 2019

A more detailed version of this procedure specific information sheet is available. Please ask your health practitioner at Joondalup Health Campus for a copy.

Write questions or notes here:



This document will give you information about a turbinectomy. If you have any questions, you should ask your GP or other relevant health professional.

What are turbinates?

The turbinates (or nasal concha) are bony shelves in your nose covered by glandular tissue rich in blood vessels and nerves.

The turbinates help to regulate the flow of air through your nose.

The inferior turbinates can sometimes permanently enlarge and block your nose (see figure 1).

The inferior turbinates usually become permanently enlarged if you get rhinitis (inflammation of the mucosa) or if you use over-the-counter decongestant sprays too much.

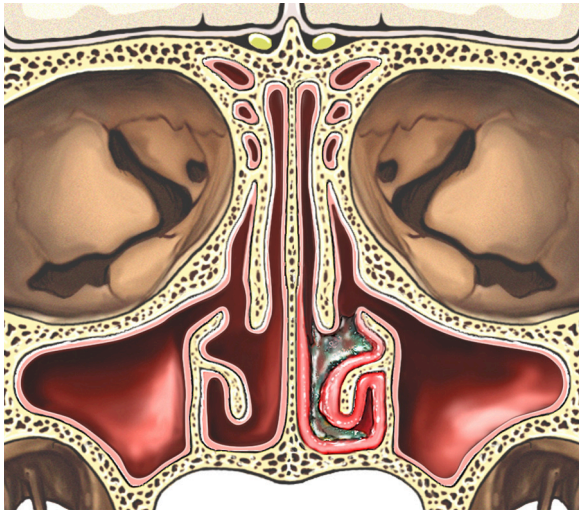


Figure 1

Cross-section of the nasal cavity showing an enlarged inferior turbinate

What are the benefits of surgery?

You should get relief from a blocked nose.

Are there any alternatives to surgery?

Your doctor may be able to give you steroid nasal sprays, decongestants or antihistamines to improve your symptoms of a blocked nose. Surgery is recommended only if medication has not worked.

What does the operation involve?

The operation is performed through your nostrils and does not result in any facial scars or black eyes.

The operation is usually performed under a general anaesthetic but a local anaesthetic can be used. The operation usually takes 15 to 30 minutes.

Reducing the size of the turbinates usually involves passing an electric current through a needle (diathermy) or cutting away the lower or outer part of the turbinate (trimming).

Your surgeon may place some packing in your nose to prevent bleeding.

What complications can happen?

1 General complications

- Pain
- Bleeding
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Blood clots

2 Specific complications

- Scar tissue (adhesions)
- Crusting in your nose
- Increased nasal discharge
- Atrophic rhinitis
- Toxic shock syndrome
- Damage to your tear duct

How soon will I recover?

You should be able to go home the same day. If you had non-dissolvable packing in your nose, you will need to stay overnight and the packing will be removed the next morning.

You will need to stay off work and away from groups of people for two weeks.

Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

Summary

The inferior turbinates can sometimes become permanently enlarged and block your nose. Surgery should relieve your symptoms.

Acknowledgements

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