

Nasal Abscess: Care Instructions

Your Care Instructions

An abscess is a bacterial infection that forms a pocket of pus. You can get an abscess in your nose after an injury, such as a blow to the face. A nasal abscess also may develop if you have had a sinus infection (sinusitis).

You may find it hard to breathe through the side of your nose with the abscess. You may have a fever and your nose may hurt. Your doctor will look at your nose and may do tests to find out what is causing your symptoms.

You will need antibiotics. In some cases, your abscess will be drained through a needle or small cut. You will need to follow up with your doctor to make sure the infection has gone away.

You may have had a sedative to help you relax. You may be unsteady after having sedation. It can take a few hours for the medicine's effects to wear off. Common side effects of sedation include nausea, vomiting, and feeling sleepy or tired.

The doctor has checked you carefully, but problems can develop later. If you notice any problems or new symptoms, **get medical treatment right away.**

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- If the doctor gave you a sedative:
 - For 24 hours, don't do anything that requires attention to detail. This includes going to work, making important decisions, or signing any legal documents. It takes time for the medicine's effects to completely wear off.
 - For your safety, do not drive or operate any machinery that could be dangerous. Wait until the medicine wears off and you can think clearly and react easily.
- Take your antibiotics as directed. Do not stop taking them just because you feel better. You need to take the full course of antibiotics.
- Take an over-the-counter pain medicine, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), or naproxen (Aleve), as needed. Read and follow all instructions on the label.
- Do not take two or more pain medicines at the same time unless the doctor told you to. Many pain medicines have acetaminophen, which is Tylenol. Too much acetaminophen (Tylenol) can be harmful.
- Follow your doctor's instructions for care of your nose, especially if your abscess was drained through a needle or small tube.
- Do not smoke, and avoid secondhand smoke. Smoking can make your condition worse. If you need help quitting, talk to your doctor about stop-smoking programs and medicines. These can increase your chances of quitting for good.
- Prevent spreading an infection. Wash your hands often. Do not sneeze or cough on others, and do not share toothbrushes, eating utensils, or drinking glasses.

When should you call for help?



Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You have trouble breathing.
- You passed out (lost consciousness).

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have new or worse symptoms of infection, such as:
 - Increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness.
 - Red streaks leading from the area.
 - Pus draining from the area.
 - A fever.
- You have new or worse pain.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You do not get better as expected.

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