WATERFRONT
PRIVATE HOSPITAL

PATIENT INFORMATION · AFTERCARE

Rhinoplasty Aftercare

General recovery guidance for nose surgery (rhinoplasty) based on Waterfront Private Hospital's written aftercare information. This online guide should be used alongside the official leaflet and the specific instructions given to you by your surgical team.

Typical recovery: 2 weeks initial recovery, 6–12 months for final results · Reviewed 4 July 2026 · Version 1.0

When to get help — your traffic light guide

RED

Call 999 or go to A&E now if you have:

These can be life-threatening. Do not wait to call the hospital first.

- Heavy nose bleeding that won't stop
- Sudden breathing problems
- High temperature (over 38°C) with confusion or unusual drowsiness

AMBER

Contact us now — do not wait — if you have:

- Severe pain not helped by painkillers
- High fever (38°C or above)
- Yellow or green discharge from wounds
- Cast completely fallen off

Office hours (Mon–Fri 9am–5pm): 0131 376 3785

Evenings and weekends during your early recovery: Out-of-Hours Nurse Advice Line 07405322689 — our nurse can advise you, contact your surgeon, or direct you to NHS services.

After your early recovery period: call the hospital in office hours, or NHS 24 on 111.

Had your surgery at Spire Shawfair Park (overnight stay)? Contact Spire directly using the number on your discharge paperwork — not the Waterfront advice line.

GREEN

Tell us at your next appointment:

Anything else that is niggling or worrying you — no concern is too small. Mention it at your next appointment, or call us during office hours.

Related Information Leaflets

Separate leaflets about the procedure itself — not the aftercare instructions above. Tap a title to download, or find them all on your procedure page in the portal.

- Part 1: Structure of the Nose (https://waterfront-patient-portal.netlify.app/waterfrontaftercare/rhinoplasty-structure-of-the-nose.pdf)
- Part 2: The Rhinoplasty Procedure (https://waterfront-patient-portal.netlify.app/waterfrontaftercare/rhinoplasty-the-rhinoplasty-procedure.pdf)
- Part 3: Preparing for Surgery & Aftercare (https://waterfront-patient-portal.netlify.app/waterfrontaftercare/rhinoplasty-preparing-for-surgery-and-aftercare.pdf)
- Part 4: Risks & Revisions (https://waterfront-patient-portal.netlify.app/waterfrontaftercare/rhinoplasty-risks-and-revisions.pdf)
- Part 5: Non-Surgical Rhinoplasty (https://waterfront-patient-portal.netlify.app/waterfrontaftercare/rhinoplasty-non-surgical-rhinoplasty.pdf)
- Part 6: Revision Rhinoplasty (https://waterfront-patient-portal.netlify.app/waterfrontaftercare/rhinoplasty-revision-rhinoplasty.pdf)

How to Use This Information

The advice below is based on Waterfront Private Hospital's written rhinoplasty aftercare leaflet. It is general guidance for the average patient and may be adapted by your consultant for your individual circumstances.

Always follow the specific instructions given to you on the day of your surgery and in your printed leaflet. If there is ever a difference, follow your consultant's written or verbal instructions and contact us for clarification.

Post-Operative Checklist

- Many patients find it most comfortable to sleep with the head raised — for example on 2–3 pillows, a wedge, or in a recliner — for the first week or so; it helps swelling settle faster
- Keep nasal splint dry for first week
- Use saline nasal spray as instructed
- Avoid blowing nose for 2 weeks

- Take prescribed antibiotics and medications
- No glasses on nose for 4 weeks (use tape support if needed)
- Attend all follow-up appointments
- Apply antibiotic ointment twice daily to incisions
- Ice packs help swelling — most helpful in the first 2–3 days

Wound Care

- Keep splint and dressings dry for first week
- Change drip pad under nose as needed
- Apply antibiotic ointment twice daily
- After splint removal, gentle cleaning as instructed
- Do not pick or touch incisions
- Protect from sun exposure
- Use saline spray gently for irrigation

Pain Management

- Take your painkillers as directed on their labels — every medicine you go home with is labelled with its dose and frequency, and your nurse will go through them with you before you leave. Paracetamol and ibuprofen can safely be taken together
- Take paracetamol every 4–6 hours (maximum 4g daily)
- Ibuprofen if prescribed by your surgeon
- Avoid aspirin
- Mild to moderate discomfort expected in first few days
- Cold compresses to the eyes help reduce swelling — most helpful in the first 2–3 days
- Bruising and swelling peak at 48–72 hours
- Most discomfort resolves within first week

Activity Restrictions

- No strenuous activity for 6 weeks
- Avoid bending over or lifting for 2 weeks
- No blowing nose for 2 weeks
- Sneeze with mouth open if needed
- No glasses on nose for 4 weeks

- Return to work: 1–2 weeks (when splint removed, usually desk jobs)
- Gentle walking is encouraged from the first days; build up pace from week 2
- Light exercise at 3 weeks (walking only)
- Contact sports at 6–8 weeks (with nose protection)

Before You Leave the Hospital

- **Painkillers:** Make sure you have your painkillers before you leave — the nurse looking after you will go through them with you.
- **Antibiotic ointment:** You will receive antibiotic ointment to apply twice daily to keep incisions moist and prevent infection.
- **Saline spray:** A saline nasal spray will be provided to help irrigate your nasal passages gently.
- **Drip pads:** Gauge drip pads will be given to absorb blood-tinged drainage. Change as needed.
- **Follow-up appointments:** You will be given a card with details of your first appointment (usually around 1 week for cast removal) and contact details for the ward if you have any concerns once you get home.
- **Getting home safely:** You must have someone to take you home. Arrange transport in advance.

Understanding Your Nasal Splint

A nasal splint (cast) has been applied to support your nose during initial healing and help shape the bone and cartilage as they heal.

Keep it dry: Avoid getting your splint wet during showers. Your surgical team may provide instructions for protecting it.

Don't adjust it: Do not try to reposition or adjust the splint yourself if it feels loose. Contact us immediately.

Removal timing: The splint will be carefully removed during your week 1 appointment. This is painless and takes just a few minutes.

Your Painkillers

Every medicine you go home with is clearly labelled with its dose and how often to take it, and your nurse will go through your painkillers with you before you leave.

Take them as directed on the label. Paracetamol and ibuprofen can safely be taken together. If your pain isn't controlled despite taking your painkillers as directed, contact us.

Lifestyle Guidelines

✓ **DO**

- Sleep with head elevated
- Use ice packs regularly
- Take medications on time
- Eat nutritious foods
- Drink plenty of water
- Protect nose from sun
- Be patient with healing
- Keep follow-up appointments
- ✗ **AVOID**
- Blowing your nose
- Wearing glasses on nose
- Very hot showers or baths in the first week (heat increases swelling; keep the splint dry)
- Bending over
- Heavy lifting
- Strenuous exercise
- Smoking and alcohol
- Swimming pools and contact sports

When You Can Resume Activities

- **Wearing glasses** — 4 weeks — Use tape or special support
- **Light exercise** — 3 weeks — Walking, gentle yoga only
- **Swimming** — 4 weeks — Avoid chlorinated pools initially
- **Contact sports** — 6–8 weeks — Must protect nose
- **Flying** — 1 week — May cause temporary swelling
- **Full exercise** — 6 weeks — Start gradually
- **Blowing nose** — 2 weeks — Very gently at first

Your Recovery Journey

Remember: Everyone heals differently. This is your guide, but your body sets the pace. Most patients feel much better by week 2 and are happy with results by 6 months.

We're here to support you through recovery. Don't hesitate to contact us with concerns.

Your Recovery, Stage by Stage

Days 1–3 — Early Recovery

Immediate post-surgery care and monitoring

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Blocked nose (you'll breathe through your mouth)
- Swelling and bruising around eyes
- Mild pain or discomfort
- Blood-tinged drainage
- Feeling tired
- Dry throat

CARE ROUTINE

- Many patients find it comfortable to keep the head raised — pillows, a wedge, or a recliner all work
- Ice packs (20 minutes at a time) are most helpful in the first 2–3 days
- Change drip pad under nose as needed
- Take pain medication as directed
- Use saline spray gently
- Apply antibiotic ointment twice daily

COMFORT

- Ibuprofen if prescribed
- Avoid aspirin

Days 4–7 — Improving Daily

Gradual reduction in swelling and discomfort

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Less drainage from nose
- Bruising may look worse before better

- Energy returning
- Cast must stay dry

CARE ROUTINE

- Continue head elevation
- Gentle walks around house
- Soft foods only
- Brush teeth carefully
- Keep appointment time handy for first follow-up
- List any concerns to discuss with nurse

COMFORT

- Pain decreasing as healing progresses
- Medication may be reduced if tolerated
- Continue regular schedule to manage discomfort

Week 1 — Cast Removal

First follow-up appointment with nurse

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Nose will look swollen after cast removal
- Skin may be oily
- Some numbness is normal

CARE ROUTINE

- Attend week 1 nurse appointment for cast removal
- Stitches will be removed
- Gentle cleaning will be performed
- First look at your new nose
- Continue gentle care instructions

COMFORT

- Pain typically minimal by week 1
- Discomfort related to cast removal, not surgery
- Continue medication as directed

Week 2 — Progressive Healing

Return to light activities

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Bruising mostly gone
- Able to return to work

- Swelling decreasing

CARE ROUTINE

- Return to work (desk jobs)
- Continue protecting nose
- No glasses on nose yet
- Gentle nose blowing when needed
- Can resume light makeup

COMFORT

- Minimal pain expected
- Discomfort reduced significantly
- Medication use declining

Weeks 3–4 — Increased Activity

Gradual return to normal activities

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Light exercise okay (walking)
- Swelling decreasing steadily
- Sensation returning to nose
- Most daily activities resumed
- Makeup okay (not on scars)

CARE ROUTINE

- Most daily activities resumed
- Light exercise (walking, gentle yoga)
- Swimming pool still avoided
- Protect nose from accidental bumps
- Wear nose protection if needed for activities

COMFORT

- No pain medication typically needed
- Mild discomfort resolved
- Full comfort in most activities

Weeks 4–6 — Return to Normal

Most restrictions lifted

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Most healing done
- Resume normal activities

- Final shape becoming apparent
- Nose functioning normally

CARE ROUTINE

- Can wear glasses on nose (use tape or special support for comfort)
- Resume normal exercise (avoid contact sports)
- Swimming okay (avoid chlorinated pools initially)
- Normal daily activities without restriction
- Protect nose from sun exposure

COMFORT

- No pain expected
- Full comfort achieved
- Contact team if any concerns arise

Month 3+ — Final Settling

Continued refinement of appearance

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Final shape visible
- All healing complete
- Breathing normal through nose
- Complete return to all activities

CARE ROUTINE

- Can wear glasses normally
- Full exercise including contact sports (after 6–8 weeks)
- Flying safe (may cause temporary swelling)
- All water activities permitted
- Continue long-term care as advised

COMFORT

- No pain expected
- Full recovery achieved
- Contact team if any concerns arise

Follow-Up Appointments

Week 1 (around Days 7–10) - Nurse Appointment — Your first post-operative appointment to check healing and remove the protective cast.

- Cast removal
- Stitch removal
- Gentle cleaning of incisions
- First look at your new nose
- Assessment of healing progress

Further nurse reviews — as needed — Some patients need further nurse reviews. If so, the nurses will arrange these with you and will discharge you from nurse-led care once they are happy your wounds have healed.

Around 6 months — surgeon review (final follow-up) — Your surgeon will usually see you at around 6 months to assess your final result. Your surgeon is always available to review you sooner if required, and in some circumstances may wish to see you before your final follow-up.

Your appointment schedule may vary. Always follow the specific dates and times given in your appointment card. Contact us if you need to reschedule.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why can't I breathe through my nose?
Swelling inside your nose blocks airflow. This is normal and improves over 2–4 weeks.

How do I sleep comfortably?
Use 2-3 pillows or a wedge pillow. Many patients find a recliner chair helpful for the first week.

When will I look normal?
Most bruising fades in 10–14 days. You'll look presentable for work at 2 weeks. Final results take up to a year.

Can I wear my glasses?
While the splint is on, glasses can rest on it. After splint removal, avoid resting glasses directly on the nose for about 4 weeks — the bones are still setting. Taping glasses to the forehead, cheek-resting supports, or contact lenses all work well. Your surgeon will confirm at follow-up when normal wear is fine; if your surgery didn't involve breaking the bones, they may clear you sooner.

What if I accidentally bump my nose?
Don't panic. If the cast moves or you have severe pain, contact us. Most minor bumps cause no harm.

When can I exercise?

Gentle walking is encouraged from the first days. Build up pace from week 2, gentle exercise at 3 weeks, and full workouts at 6 weeks.

When is the splint removed?

The nasal splint is typically removed 5–7 days after surgery during your first follow-up appointment.