



## The Sinuses and Functional Endoscopic Sinus Surgery (FESS)

The sinuses are air-filled cavities located within the bones of the face and around the nasal passages. They help humidify the air we breathe, enhance our voices, and reduce the weight of the skull. There are four main pairs of sinuses: maxillary, frontal, ethmoid, and sphenoid.

Functional Endoscopic Sinus Surgery (FESS) is a minimally invasive surgical procedure used to restore sinus ventilation and normal function. The primary goal of FESS is to clear the sinus passageways and restore their normal drainage and function. This is particularly beneficial for patients with chronic sinusitis, nasal polyps, and other obstructive nasal conditions. FESS is performed under anesthesia and typically takes 1.5-3 hours depending on the complexity. Most patients go home from the surgical facility the same day as the procedure.

### Pre-Operative Instructions:

- **Preparation and Fasting:**
  - Avoid eating or drinking after midnight the night before surgery.
  - Avoid alcohol for several days prior to the procedure as this can increase your risk of bleeding.
  - Do not smoke for 2 weeks prior to the procedure as this can impair the healing process.
- **Medications:**
  - You will likely need to stop taking blood thinners, weight loss medications and some diabetic medications, consult with your primary doctor. See attached for general recommendations.
  - Take all other prescribed medications with a small sip of water as instructed.
- **Health Status:**
  - Notify your doctor if you have any symptoms of cold, flu, or respiratory infection.
  - Inform your doctor of any allergies, especially to sedatives or anesthetics.
- **Day of Surgery:**
  - Arrive at the surgical facility as instructed.
  - Wear comfortable clothing and remove jewelry, makeup, and contact lenses.
  - Arrange for a responsible adult to drive you home after the procedure, as you will not be able to drive yourself.

Viewmont Surgery Center -- 50 13th Avenue NE Hickory, NC 28601 [\(828\) 624-1250](tel:8286241250)  
[www.viewmontsurgerycenter.com](http://www.viewmontsurgerycenter.com)

Catawba Valley Medical Center -- 810 Fairgrove Church Rd, Hickory, NC [\(828\) 326-3000](tel:8283263000)  
[www.catawbavalleyhealth.org](http://www.catawbavalleyhealth.org)

Frye Regional Medical Center-- 420 N Center St, Hickory, NC 28601 [\(828\) 315-5000](tel:8283155000)  
[www.fryemedctr.com](http://www.fryemedctr.com)



### Post-Operative Instructions:

- **Care After Surgery:**
  - Expect nasal congestion and bloody nasal discharge for the first few days; this is normal.
  - Elevate your head with extra pillows at night to help reduce swelling.
  - You can begin over the counter nasal saline sprays the same day as the procedure.
  - Beginning 24 hours after the procedure, you may begin irrigating your sinuses with an over-the-counter rinse bottle (ex. NeilMed). Do NOT use tap water for sinus irrigations.
- **Medications**
  - Most patients can control pain by alternating acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Motrin/Advil) every 3 hours. The first home dose should be timed according to last known dose received at surgical facility.
  - Pain medicine may be prescribed if necessary.
  - Antibiotics may or may not be prescribed depending on your specific situation.
  - Use saline nasal sprays and possibly nasal steroid sprays as directed to aid healing.
  - Oxymetazoline (Afrin) may be used to control moderate nasal bleeding. 2 sprays each side every 2 hours. If bleeding is excessive, contact the office.
  - Resume your normal home medications unless otherwise instructed.
- **Activity:**
  - You may shower 24 hours after surgery. Do not swim or submerge until cleared to do so.
  - Rest with minimal activity for the first few days after surgery.
  - Avoid heavy lifting, straining, or bending over to prevent bleeding.
  - Do NOT blow your nose until your first post-operative visit. If you have the sensation that you need to blow your nose, use saline rinses instead.
  - Do NOT drive if you are taking prescription pain medication.
  - Do NOT fly until cleared to do so by your surgeon.
- **Signs to Watch For:**
  - Increased pain, swelling, redness, or discharge that could indicate an infection.
  - Any vision changes, severe headaches, or excessive bleeding should be reported immediately.
  - Smell and taste disturbance after surgery is common and typically resolve over time.

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