

# **NASAL BLOCKAGE**

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## What causes nasal blockage?

There are a number of reasons why your nose may feel blocked – please see the ‘nasal blockage’ section in the gallery for photographs to accompany this information.

- A twist or deviation in the nasal partition (nasal septum)
- Swelling of the lining of the nose (called Rhinitis), often associated with swelling of the nasal turbinates (small scroll shaped bones attached to the sidewall on the internal surface of each side of the nose)
- Long standing sinusitis, which may be associated with Nasal Polyps (small grape-like protrusions of the lining of the nasal sinuses into the nose).
- A floppy sidewall of the nose may collapse when you breathe, especially at night or when you are exercising. This may respond well to the use of ‘Breathe-Right’ nasal strips or nasal dilators such as ‘Nozovent.
- In children, large adenoids may be responsible for a blocked nose and snoring. If a child’s nose is blocked or running on just one side only, however, never forget that they may have inserted a foreign body up their nose!

## How can you treat my nasal blockage?

These conditions may be present alone or in combination, and accurate diagnosis by me is therefore vital to customise your treatment.

Rhinitis and sinusitis may respond to steroid nasal drops or sprays, but it is important not to use decongestant drops or sprays such as Otrivine or Vicks Sinex for extended periods. They are fine to use for up to 10 days if you have a cold, but if you use them for longer than this you risk damaging the nasal lining permanently.

If medical treatment doesn’t help I may well recommend surgery, which may involve one or a combination of these procedures:-

- An operation to correct and reposition the nasal septum in the middle of the nose (see ‘Septoplasty’)
- An operation to decrease the size of the turbinates (see ‘Turbinate Surgery’)
- Surgery to open the sinuses and /or remove the nasal polyps (see ‘Functional Endoscopic Sinus Surgery’.)
- Surgery to implant cartilage grafts into your nose (taken from your nasal septum or from parts of your ear where it is not needed) may help a floppy nasal sidewall.
- In children, removing the adenoids ( an ‘Adenoidectomy’ ) may be required.