

INFERIOR TURBINECTOMY

1. Definition:

Partial or complete removal of inferior turbinates

2. Indications:

Hyperplastic turbinate mucosa that fails to respond to adequate medical therapy or less invasive surgical procedures such as a sub-mucous diathermy; laser turbinoplasty and turbinate outfracture.

To improve nasal ventilation. The procedure has very little role in improving rhinorrhoea or sneezing.

3. Pre-operative Assessment:

4. Method/Operative technique:

The operation is generally carried out under general anaesthesia but local anaesthesia is possible. In most cases the patients stay overnight after the operation. Usually the Surgeon will recommend the insertion of a packing for about 24 hours. The procedure is done through the nose; there are no external scars.

5. Information/Consent:

There is always some bleeding following the operation but this usually settles spontaneously.

There may be feeling of congestion and tenacious mucus production with some blood stained discharge for two weeks after the operation. There will also be a sensation of dryness of the nose for some time.

There can be some excess lacrimation or watering of the eyes, which usually settles, but on rare occasions can become permanent. Heavy crusting of the nose is a rare but possible complication.

To alleviate these symptoms the Surgeon will usually recommend a course of saline douche and possibly topical steroids following the operation.

Exceptional risks

In very rare cases the bleeding may be very heavy, requiring either blood transfusion or return to theatre to insert packs or tie off a bleeding vessel.

Mortality rate

The mortality rate from turbinectomy is extremely rare, however, as with all operative interventions, no matter how minor, mortality can occur as a result of reaction to drugs or very rarely massive bleedings. To put this in context the risk the patient takes in coming to the hospital for the consultation is much greater than the risk of mortality from turbinectomy.

Recurrence

Recurrence of symptoms is possible especially in patients who have nasal allergies, Aspirin sensitivity or asthma.

Alternative to Inferior Turbinectomy:

Continuation of medical therapy or less invasive procedures such as radiofrequency or laser reduction of turbinates, which have a higher incidence of recurrence.

6. Outcome measures