

A patient's Guide to

SINUS PRECAUTIONS

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*****FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS
CAREFULLY*****

DO the following:

1. Follow these instructions for 10 days unless told otherwise.
2. Sneeze with you mouth open “let it go”
3. Treat the area gently
4. Take any prescribed medications, particularly antibiotics, as directed.
5. Unless instructed or prescribed otherwise, use an over-the-counter nasal decongestant in the nostril corresponding to the side(s) with the “hole” if any nasal congestion is experienced. Do not use regularly for longer than 3-5 consecutive days.

DO NOT do the following:

1. Blow your nose (but it's OK to “sniff”)
2. Drink liquids through a straw, especially thick ones
3. Rinse your mouth forcefully
4. Play woodwind instruments or any activity that requires a forceful blowing or sucking action
5. Fly or scuba dive, if possible.

*****THE FOLLOWING TEXT EXPLAINS
WHY YOU WERE GIVEN THESE
INSTRUCTIONS AND WHY YOU MUST
FOLLOW THEM*****

Your surgeon has identified that you either have communication (a hole) between your mouth and your sinus, or that you are at risk of developing one. You must carefully follow these instructions to help prevent a sinus infection or a chronic communication that necessitates further surgery repair. Please note a bloody discharge a day or 2 after surgery is not uncommon.

This sample dental x-rays shows the proximity of the sinus to the tooth roots in a normal



individual. The arrows point to the bottom, or “floor” of the sinus. It can be seen how tooth removal may sometimes lead to communication

between the sinus and the empty space where the tooth used to be.

The purpose of these instructions is to **prevent a pressure difference** between your nose (which freely connects to your sinuses) and your mouth. This is necessary until the sinus lining heals, which may take 1 to 2 weeks. If a pressure difference is created prior to healing, air will travel though the hole and keep it open. This could then remain open permanently, called a “fistula”. This leads to bacteria and debris from your mouth entering your sinus, causing infection, nasal speech, or even food coming out of your nose! Further surgery is almost always required to repair the fistula if it occurs.

