

ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL HEALTHSOURCE

Deviated Septum Can Be Corrected

Ideally, the septum, the wall between the left and right sides of the nose, are exactly in the center of the nose. In about 80 percent of us, however, the nasal septum is a little off center. Most of the time, this isn't a problem. However, in some cases the septum is significantly off center, a condition known as a deviated septum.

People with a more pronounced deviation often have trouble with airflow in the narrow nasal passage. Blocked sinus openings trigger recurrent sinus infections. Because airflow is blocked, the lining of the narrow nasal septum becomes dry and cracked, leading to frequent nosebleeds.

Some people are born with a deviated septum, often because of injury during the birthing process; others develop the condition later in life.

Symptoms of a deviated septum include blockage of one or both nostrils; nasal congestion, sometimes on one side; frequent nosebleeds or sinus infections; facial pain, headaches, or postnasal drip; and noisy breathing in infants and young children.

If any of these symptoms are frequent, your family doctor may refer you to an otolaryngologist—an ear, nose, and throat specialist. Sometimes, the specialist may recommend surgery to correct the deviated septum. This type of surgery is septoplasty. Through a small incision inside the nose, the surgeon will move your septum to a normal position. In some cases, the surgeon will also reshape the external appearance of your nose in a procedure called rhinoplasty. If the surgeon performs both of the procedures at the same time, it's septorhinoplasty.

Most patients tolerate nasal surgery very well and are up and around the next day and able to return to school or sedentary work in less than a week.



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