

Septoplasty

The nasal septum separates the left and right sides of the nose into two nasal cavities or nostrils with the division down the center of the nose. When the nasal septum is deviated, the separating partition needs to be returned to center line. A deviated septum can be caused by trauma to the nose, or may be a congenital condition. The narrowing of the nasal cavity can result in a decrease of airflow and breathing problems. If medications are not sufficient to correct the nasal breathing problems, then surgical correction of the deviated septum is a highly successful treatment option.

Definition

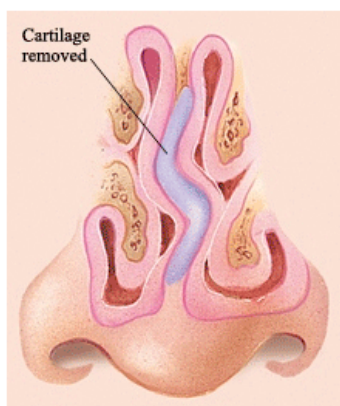
The surgical septoplasty procedure to correct this deviation is a septoplasty. Septoplasty is a surgery to straighten a deviated septum. The septum is the wall dividing the left and right nasal cavities. It is made of cartilage and bone and is lined with a thin mucus membrane.

A normal septum is straight and in the center of the nose. A deviated septum is bent or off-center. Septal deviation may occur during development in the womb, during birth, as your nose grows, or after a traumatic injury. Septoplasty may be done at the same time as other nasal surgery.

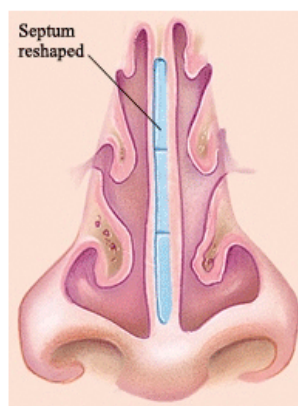
Reasons for Procedure

Septoplasty is considered if a deviated septum obstructs your nasal passages. The obstruction can cause impaired nasal breathing, sinus infections, obstructive sleep apnea, or recurrent nose bleeds.

Deviated Nasal Septum



During surgery, cartilage and bone may be removed to reshape the deviated septum.



After surgery, there is more breathing space. Enough cartilage and bone remain to give the nose support.

Description of the Procedure

An incision will be made inside the nose. The lining of the septum will be lifted up and out of the way. The bent bone or cartilage will be straightened by moving it, reshaping it, or cutting off the bent piece. After the repair is done, the lining will be replaced over the top of the septum. Gauze may be placed in the nose to soak up any blood. A plastic splint may also be inserted to keep the septum in place while it heals.

Possible Complications

Problems from the procedure are uncommon, but all procedures have some risk. Your doctor will review potential problems, like:

- Numbness in the tip of the nose or upper front teeth
- Bleeding
- Infection
- Scarring
- Septal perforation—a hole in the septum
- No improvement in symptoms
- Poor cosmetic outcome

Before your procedure, talk to your doctor about ways to manage factors that may increase your risk of complications such as:

- Smoking
- Drinking
- Chronic diseases, such as diabetes or obesity

Anesthesia and Surgery Time

Septoplasty is most commonly performed under general anesthesia, with the patient completely asleep. Septoplasty surgery typically lasts between 1 to 1 1/2 hours.

Recovery

There are some important instructions to follow after surgery. These instructions are meant to help reduce discomfort and promote proper healing. A detailed postoperative instruction sheet is given after surgery.