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ALAR BATTENS

What are Alar Battens?

Alar battens are pieces of cartilage taken from the nasal septum (the wall between the 2 halves of the nose) or from the ear. They are placed in the side wall of the nose under the skin.

What are the Reasons for Having Alar Batten Surgery?

One cause of a having a blocked nose is known as *nasal valve collapse*. This refers to narrowness and weakness at the *nasal valve*, the narrowest part of the nasal airway. There are a number of operations available to treat nasal valve collapse. Selection of the appropriate surgery depends on proper identification of the anatomic cause of the collapse. Alar batten grafts are especially useful for addressing nasal valve collapse caused by a weak nasal sidewall.

What Causes Nasal Valve Collapse?

Nasal valve collapse can be caused by ageing, having a blocked nose for a long time, previous surgery on the nose, injury to the nose and previous radiotherapy.

How is Nasal Valve Collapse Diagnosed?

We all have a degree of collapse of the side wall of the nose when we breathe in with force as in during exercise. If this occurs when we breathe in quietly, then there is evidence of nasal valve collapse.

Please click on this link to see someone with nasal valve collapse.

How Can We Treat a Blocked Nose Due to Nasal Valve Collapse?

The nasal blockage can be treated by wearing external nasal strips during exercise or at the time of sleeping. A more permanent solution involves an operation called Alar Batten surgery.

Under a general anaesthetic, the ENT Surgeon takes a cartilage graft from the septum of the nose and shapes it into 2 strips that are then buried under the skin of the side wall of the nose. (See Figure) The cartilage acts to stiffen the side wall of the nose just as a collar stiffener makes the collars of shirts more rigid.



How Long Do I Have to Stay in Hospital?

For most patients, alar batten surgery is done as a day case and you can go home on the same day. Your surgeon will use dissolvable nasal dressings inside your nose. You will be given a saline or sea water spray to use four times daily to help dissolve the dressings. Your surgeon may also give you some antibiotics after your operation.

Are There any Complications From Having Alar Batten Surgery?

Minor complications include bleeding from the nose and infection. You may notice a subtle change in the shape of the nose caused by fullness of the side wall of the nose caused by the cartilage graft. There is a very small risk of having a hole in the nasal septum (septal perforation). If this

occurs, it can cause crusting and whistling when breathing through the nose. If septal perforation occurs, your surgeon may be able to close it with another operation.

What is the Success Rate of Alar Batten Surgery?

This surgery has a success rate of approximately 80% in improving nasal blockage caused by nasal valve collapse.

Any other Questions?

Your ENT surgeon or nurse will be happy to answer any other questions you have.