



Head and Neck Associates of Orange County, Inc.

An Incorporated Medical Group

Head & Neck Surgery

Pediatric & Adult Otolaryngology

Facial Reconstructive Surgery

NASAL OBSTRUCTION

Nasal obstruction refers to some blockage of the nose or nasal cavity and can be caused by a wide variety of problems. There are several common causes of nasal obstruction:

Inferior turbinate hypertrophy:

On the inside of the nose there are normal bony structures called turbinates. They are covered by a large amount of spongy mucosa (the pink lining inside the nose). The turbinates are very susceptible to allergy and dust irritation. If they become swollen, it can be difficult to breathe through the nose.

Deviated nasal septum

The septum is the structure separating the nostrils inside the nose. A deviated nasal septum is a crooked septum. Symptoms may include difficulty breathing through the nose (especially on one side), and a runny nose. A deviated nasal septum may be caused by trauma to the nose.

- **Foreign bodies in the nose**
- **Large adenoids – which block the back of the nose**
- **Swelling of the lining of the nose from allergies**
- **Choanal atresia:** This is a congenital (present at birth) condition that is a narrowing or blockage of the nasal airway by tissue.
- **Pyriform aperture stenosis**

Diagnosis

Your doctor will ask for a complete medical history and will perform a thorough physical examination. At Head and Neck Associates our specialists perform a nasal examination with lighted scopes and may use imaging, including CT scans and MRIs, when necessary. We may recommend an allergy evaluation.

Treatment

Nasal obstruction is often initially treated with medications, some of which may address underlying allergy or other reversible causes of nasal swelling. You may be prescribed a nasal steroid spray to decrease inflammation of the nose and turbinates.

Surgery to shrink the turbinates may be required if there is no improvement with medications. There are several new surgical techniques that can be used to shrink turbinates, including use of radiofrequency energy or a small tissue-shaving device. You may require having your adenoids removed surgically if they are the cause of the nasal obstruction. Most adenoidectomies are performed on an outpatient basis.