



Caldwell-Luc Procedure

This procedure is used to open a sinus in the cheek (maxillary sinus) and remove its diseased lining, whether that be a benign polyp or a concerning tumor. A small cut is made between the upper lip and gum, and a tiny piece of bone is removed from the front of the sinus to gain access to the involved area. The natural opening of the sinus that normally drains into the nasal cavity is often enlarged at the same time. This improves drainage of normal mucous and reduces the chance of recurrent disease.

Facial swelling is the most common side effect of this operation. It usually lasts a few days and resolves spontaneously. It is occasionally associated with some bruising. The swelling and bruises tend to migrate downwards toward the neck. Numbness and tingling of the cheek and upper lip may occur. These usually subside in a few weeks, but could be permanent. Very rarely, facial pain may occur and last several weeks before improving. There is a small risk of discoloration or numbness of the nearby upper teeth. Finally, in extremely rare instances, a connection between the mouth and the sinus (oro-antral fistula) may occur if the incision doesn't heal well. It usually closes by itself, but sometimes, it may require another procedure to close the hole.

After surgery, it is important to try to take it easy for a week. An ice pack over the cheek for the first couple days will help a lot with swelling and discomfort. Avoid blowing your nose hard for a week as well, as it could trigger some impressive swelling and discomfort. Rinse your nose with a saline solution a few times a day for the first week. Any over the counter product that provides at least a cup of saline in the rinse will suffice, such as a SinuRinse bottle or NetiPot. The sutures used to close the incision will dissolve on their own after a couple weeks. It is best to eat soft foods for the first week as things are healing to avoid accidentally injuring the incision area.