

## **Removal of Foreign Body from Nose**

### **WHAT IS REMOVAL OF FOREIGN BODY FROM THE NOSE?**

This is a simple procedure to remove an object which has become trapped in the nose (usually of a child). The affected nostril is numbed with an anesthetic spray and special forceps are used to remove the offending object. The procedure may be performed in the doctor's office or in the hospital emergency room. Sometimes, where a child is uncooperative, or an object is well embedded, general anesthesia may be necessary.

In adults, foreign bodies may have been lodged in the nose undetected for or even years. Causing discharge and obstruction, they may have become encrusted, requiring removal under general anesthesia.

### **WHY IS IT PERFORMED?**

Most commonly it is small children who are brought to the emergency room with something stuck up their noses -- a peanut, perhaps, or a piece of candy, a button, or a ring. Often this can be expelled with forceful nose-blowing. If not, it must be removed surgically.

### **RISKS AND BENEFITS**

Foreign bodies must be removed as soon as possible to prevent nasal obstruction and infection and to stop them from traveling down the back of the nose into the esophagus or trachea. The technique for removal is a simple one virtually without risk.

### **THE PROCEDURE**

Where it is evident that the child has something lodged in his or her nose, there is rarely any problem in locating and removing it. Sometimes, however, a child is brought in with swelling of the membranes in one nostril, together with a foul-smelling discharge -- symptomatic of some kind of obstruction. In this case an X-ray may be needed to confirm the presence and location of a foreign object. Wearing a head light, the doctor uses fingertip pressure on the tip of the child's nose to dilate the nostril for examination. If the child is uncooperative, the nostril is sprayed with a local anesthetic and a vasoconstricting agent which causes the blood vessels to constrict. This reduces the amount of bleeding during the procedure. Once the tissues are numbed, the doctor should be able to withdraw the foreign object gently, using surgical forceps or a blunt hook. Or sometimes a small object can be cleared by suction. Finally, the nostril is cleansed with a cotton swab.

### **POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS**

There should be no complications following this procedure. The nose may be slightly sore for a while, but there should be little bleeding if at all. Any swelling should recede within a few days. If any difficulty is encountered during the procedure, or the child is distressed, the doctor may recommend removal of the foreign body under general anesthesia, requiring a few hours' postoperative care.

*1993. American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, Inc. This leaflet is published as a public service. The material may be freely used so long as attribution is given to the American Academy of Otolaryngology- Head and Neck Surgery, Inc., Alexandria, VA*