Functional endoscopic sinus surgery (FESS)

FESS is a procedure to open the pathways of your sinuses so they can drain well.

Your sinuses

Your sinuses are air-filled spaces in the bones near your nose. Mucus drains from the sinuses into your nose. When sinus pathways are blocked, mucus doesn't drain well. You may get infection and pain. If other treatments don't work, your doctor may suggest FESS.

The surgery

FESS uses a small hollow tube, or scope, with a camera. The scope goes through the nostrils and into the sinus. All surgery is done through the scope. The goal is to open the sinus pathways and allow them to drain. After FESS, your doctor may recommend a procedure to clean out your sinuses.

Is FESS for you?

Evidence suggests that FESS may result in quality outcomes in certain situations. FESS may be viewed as Medically Necessary if you have:

- Four or more sinus infections (acute sinusitis) in a year.
- A sinus infection (chronic sinusitis) that lasts more than 12 weeks.
- Other serious sinus problems.

You and your doctor can read our guideline for FESS. Or learn more at National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

Is FESS an appropriate treatment for sinus infections?

As with any surgery, there may be risks and concerns associated with FESS. If the following are not true, then the harms may outweigh any benefits. FESS may be right for you, if these are all true:

- Your doctor has checked for allergies.
- Other treatments haven't worked. Examples: antibiotics, steroid inhaler, sinus rinse
- Your doctor has done other tests or you have severe symptoms.

If this is not true for you, the procedure may be viewed as Not Medically Necessary.

Ask your doctor

- Is FESS right for me?
- What are the risks?
- Do I have other options?

This Consumer Tool is intended to provide you with general background information about this procedure or service, however it is not intended to summarize, list all applicable clinical criteria in the coverage guidelines or clinical UM guideline, nor does it replace the applicable coverage guidelines or clinical UM guideline which will be used to determine the available benefits under the terms of your Health Benefit Plan. In accordance with terms of your Plan, the coverage guidelines or clinical UM guideline is the controlling document and this Consumer Tool does not supersede it. If there is any conflict between this Consumer Tool and the coverage guidelines or clinical UM guideline, the coverage guidelines or clinical UM guideline will be the governing document. In addition, this Consumer Tool is not intended to serve as medical advice. Please check with your physician for any advice about your health.

Your plan may not pay for all services and treatments in this guideline. To learn more, see your certificate of coverage or call the customer care number on your ID card.