

Patient information factsheet

Nose fracture

We have given you this factsheet because you have attended our emergency department or ear, nose and throat (ENT) department with a suspected nose fracture. It explains what a nose fracture is, the complications to be aware of and when to get medical help. We hope it will help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of your healthcare team.

What is a nose fracture?

A nose fracture is a break in the bone or cartilage over the bridge, or in the sidewall or septum (the structure that divides the nostrils) of the nose. It is a common injury that can result from any forceful impact to the face.

Symptoms

Symptoms of a nose fracture include:

- bruising and swelling around the nose and eyes
- obvious deformity of the nose (a misshapen nose)
- difficulty breathing through the nose
- nosebleeds

Possible complications

Complications related to a nose fracture may include:

Nosebleeds

Nosebleeds are common after a nasal injury and will usually stop by themselves or with a few basic measures, such as:

- leaning your head forward
- pinching the bottom third of your nose (the soft bit)
- applying cold packs or ice packs to your forehead and neck

Call **111** or attend your nearest emergency department if:

- the bleeding fails to stop after 20 minutes
- you are losing a significant amount of blood despite following the above measures

Difficulty breathing through your nose

This is common after a nasal injury, as the lining of the nose can become swollen. This can take six months to settle.

Attend your nearest emergency department immediately if you notice a purple, grape-like swelling inside your nose that is painful or that blocks your breathing. This could be a sign that you have a septal haematoma (a collection of blood in the space between your two nostrils). If this is the case, you will need urgent treatment to prevent further complications.

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Nasal shape

Fractures to the nasal bones cause a lot of swelling and it can take between five and seven days for the swelling to settle down enough for the bones to be checked properly.

Seven days after your injury, check your nose to see whether the shape has changed (no longer straight) or if there are any new lumps. You can do this yourself using a mirror, or you may find it helpful to ask a family member or a friend for their opinion on the shape of your nose. Alternatively, you could try comparing your nose to an earlier photo of yourself.

When should I check my nose?	Has the shape changed?	What should I do?
Seven days after your injury	No	You do not need to do anything. Your nose will continue to heal on its own over the next six weeks. While your nose recovers, we recommend avoiding activities that could further damage it, such as playing sports.
	Yes	<p>You must refer yourself to our ENT service for an assessment straightaway. Treatment to correct your nose shape will need to be done within three weeks of your injury, before the bones start to heal.</p> <p>To refer yourself to our ENT service, email us at: ENTjuniors@uhs.nhs.uk</p> <p>In your email, please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• your name• your date of birth• your phone number• the date of your injury• a brief summary of what happened to your nose• photos of your face from up above, face on, and from either side (if possible) <p>Alternatively, call our ENT team on 023 8120 6511 / 4644 (Monday to Sunday, 8am to 8pm).</p>

Treatment

A fractured nose usually heals on its own within six weeks. However, if, after seven days of your injury, you notice that your nose has changed shape, we can perform a procedure in hospital called manipulation. If you need this procedure, a specialist nose surgeon will manually re-align your nasal bones so that your nose heals in as straight a position as possible. Manipulation can only be done within three weeks of you fracturing your nose. After this time, the injury will begin to heal on its own, even if the bones are out of place.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about the information in this factsheet, please call **023 8120 6511 / 4644** (Monday to Sunday, 8am to 8pm).

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Useful links

www.nhs.uk/conditions/broken-nose

www.nhs.uk/conditions/nosebleed

For a translation of this document, or a version in another format such as easy read, large print, Braille or audio, please telephone **0800 484 0135** or email **patientsupporthub@uhs.nhs.uk**

For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit **www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport**