

Nasal Injuries

You have injured your nose and when this happens, it can become very swollen which makes it difficult to know what has been damaged.

A member of staff will examine your nose to make sure there is no bleeding, no blood clots (haematoma) in your septum and that you can breathe through both nostrils.

We do not usually do x-rays to check whether you have broken your nose as these bones do not show up well and it does not change management. If you do need any x-rays, these will be to check that you have not damaged other parts of your face, such as your eye sockets, cheek bones or jaw bone.

When you go home

- Take simple pain relief such as paracetamol.
- Hold an ice pack wrapped in a tea towel on your nose for up to 15 minutes several times a day to reduce the swelling around your nose.
- Keep your head upright when lying in bed by adding more pillows – this will help to reduce swelling

If your nose bleeds, pinch the fleshy part of the nose firmly for 20 minutes. Breathe through your mouth and lean forward in a sitting position. Apply cold compresses to your nose, forehead and nape of neck to reduce the swelling. Spit out any blood in the mouth. Seek medical help if the bleeding will not stop.

A broken nose usually heals on its own within three weeks.

Do not

- try to straighten your nose yourself if it's changed shape
- wear glasses until the swelling has gone down, unless you need them
- pick or blow your nose until it's healed
- do strenuous exercise for the first 2 weeks
- play sports for at least 6 weeks if there's a chance your face might be hit

When to seek further advice

- A nosebleed that will not stop
- Unable to breathe through your nose or it feels constantly blocked.
- A purple swelling inside your nose - it may be painful or block your breathing
- Clear fluid leaking out of the nose.
- Severe headache with blurred or double vision
- Eye pain and double vision
- Other symptoms of a severe head injury
- A high temperature

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Follow up

If there is visible deviation or significant swelling you will be referred to the ENT nurse led clinic for assessment 5-7 days post injury. This clinic is held at OPD4 at St John's Hospital, Livingston.

A proportion of patients with ongoing nasal deviation when reviewed at clinic will be referred for manipulation of nasal bones in order to attempt to correct this. It is important that this operation is done within 2 – 3 weeks before the bones set. If you decide not to have an operation, it is unlikely that the shape of the nose will get any better, but the bones should heal by themselves in 4 – 6 weeks.

Please cancel this appointment if you have no ongoing concerns about your nose and you do not wish any change in shape to be corrected. You can cancel your appointment by calling 01506 523 183.

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