
This leaflet gives advice on how to care for your fracture at home.

Nasal injury

Bony fractures of the nose are common and account for nearly 50% of all facial fractures. Fractures to the nasal bones cause swelling and it may take a few weeks for the swelling to settle down. A GP or the Emergency Department should check your nose initially. They will often ask an ENT surgeon to check your nose seven to 10 days after the injury to see if the bones and cartilage need any treatment.

Treatment

X-rays do not contribute to the clinical management of uncomplicated nasal fractures. Most of the time, the swelling settles down and there is either none or little change in the shape of the nose. If the nose is deformed after the swelling has subsided, manipulation under anaesthesia can be offered.

Manipulation

If indicated, this can take place up to 21 days following the injury, however it is often more successful if undertaken within 14 days of injury. Some severe deformities may not be corrected completely and any residual deformity even after manipulation may require further surgery after the injury.

Complications

Nosebleeds

Nosebleeds are common and usually settle on their own with simple first aid. Sit forward, spitting out any blood and firmly pinching the soft part of your nose around your nostrils, for 15 minutes. If the nose bleed persists after 20-30 minutes you should get medical help. Placing a covered ice pack or cold flannel on the bridge of your nose or forehead can help slow the bleeding.

Further treatment in hospital, such as nasal packing, is occasionally required for nosebleeds that do not stop of their own accord.

Septal haematoma

This is caused by blood collecting between the central partition wall (septum) of the nose and its lining. It causes a purple/red boggy swelling of the septum on one side or both. If this occurs it can result in nasal obstruction, pain and damage to the cartilage. You will be referred to the ENT Department for further management.

Nasal obstruction

Nasal blockage and reduction in the sense of smell is common and usually occurs after injury due to swelling. This may take four to six weeks to resolve. If the nose is still blocked after this it may be due to the septum being deviated following the injury, which blocks the nasal passage. Septal deviation may require surgical correction if the blockage is significant.

Rare complications

- **Cerebrospinal fluid leak** – rarely, the thin plate of bone at the roof of the nose may fracture causing a leak of the clear fluid through your nose. You will be referred to the Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) Department for further management.
- **Loss of sense of smell (anosmia)** – the smell receptors in the roof of the nose can also be damaged or obstructed. Recovery may be variable.

Further advice

- Contact sports should not be played for 6 weeks following nasal injury and especially after manipulation
 - Use ice packs (frozen peas in a damp towel is sufficient) for 10 minutes, 3 or 4 times a day
 - Regular pain relief, such as paracetamol
 - If there is swelling, prop your head up in bed by sleeping on a few pillows
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