

Nose injury

Introduction

The nose is a very prominent feature of the face and is very easily injured. Any injury to the nose is likely to result in very noticeable swelling, which can lead to significant bruising and occasionally black eyes.

Nose injuries are no longer routinely x-rayed as swelling makes it impossible to detect subtle injuries. In the majority of cases once the swelling has subsided, usually after five days, any deformity is corrected and no further treatment will be required.

How do I know if I have broken my nose?

A broken nose will be painful, swollen and red. Other typical symptoms are:

- Bruising around the eyes.
- A nosebleed.
- Tenderness when you touch the nose.
- A crunching or crackling sound when you touch the nose.
- Difficulty breathing out of the nose, as if something is blocking it.
- History of trauma.

If your nose looks normal once the swelling has gone down (normally takes up to 5 days), it will heal properly even if it was broken.

If the nose is deformed it can be realigned to a normal shape. However this needs to be done within 12-14 days of the injury otherwise it may not be possible as the fracture will have started to heal. The Clinician would have referred you onwards to the Ear, Nose and Throat Clinic. Please await them to contact you for a follow up appointment within 5-7 days of your attendance.

Caring for your nose at home

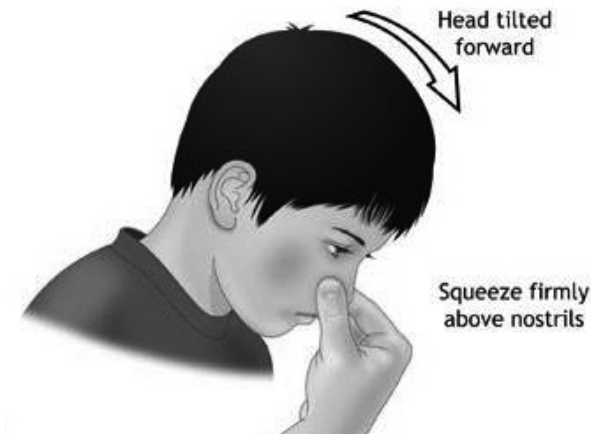
You can usually manage your nose injury at home, following the advice below:

- Painkillers are usually helpful and you will have been advised on the most appropriate medicine to take when you were seen. It is important you take the medicine regularly in the first few days to ensure the pain does not become unbearable. If despite taking the medication you have been advised to take the pain is not relieved, or the pain seems to be getting worse, you should see your doctor for further advice.

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- You should avoid blowing your nose as much as possible, as this will be painful and may make your nose bleed and cause swelling around your eyes.
- Cold packs or ice packs will help to reduce the swelling. A packet of frozen peas can be wrapped in a towel and applied to your nose for a maximum of ten minutes every one to two hours for the first couple of days to reduce the swelling.
- Prop your head up in bed by sleeping on a few pillows to reduce the swelling.

Dealing with nosebleeds



- Sit up and lean forward over a bowl or bucket keeping your mouth open to assist with breathing.
- Pinch the soft area of your nose at the tip blocking both of your nostrils and applying firm pressure to encourage clotting.
- Apply an ice pack to the bridge of your nose and forehead.
- Breathe through your nose and try to relax as you keep your nose pinched for 15 minutes.
- If still bleeding - try another 15 minutes of pressure.
- If still bleeding - attend the nearest Emergency Unit.
- Try not to swallow any blood as it is likely to make you feel sick.

When to attend the Accident and Emergency Department (not Walk-in Centres or Minor Injuries)

- A nose bleed occurs and does not resolve despite continuous pressure over 20 minutes and the application of an ice pack.
- The pain worsens despite regular pain relief medication.
- You start to feel unwell and have a temperature.
- The sense of having a blocked nose worsens in association with increased pain.
- You can feel a boggy swelling (a blood clot) between your nostrils (septum) - it may be painful, swollen or block your breathing.
- A large open wound on your nose - or something else still in the wound, such as glass.

Or you have any significant signs of head injury, such as:

- You start vomiting.
- You become excessively sleepy or confused.
- You develop an increasingly severe headache.
- You have blurred vision or any other new visual problems.
- Eye pain or double vision.
- You have clear fluid trickling from your nose or ears.
- You experience any significant neck pain - especially if there is numbness and tingling in your arms.
- You keep collapsing (passing out) or have difficulty speaking.

Please contact your GP or NHS111 for any queries or concerns.

If you would like this information in another format or language, please contact the Your Experience Team on freephone 0800 694 5530. Alternatively you can email wcnt.yourexperience@nhs.net

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