



**University
Hospitals Sussex**
NHS Foundation Trust

Broken nose (nasal fracture)

Accident and emergency

Patient information

What is this information about?

This leaflet provides information about a broken nose (nasal fracture).

It explains:

- What a broken nose is.
- Common symptoms.
- How it is treated.
- Advice for caring for your nose at home.
- When to seek medical help.

Why have I been given this information?

You have been given this leaflet because you may have injured or broken your nose.

A broken nose is a common injury and often occurs after:

- A fall.
- A sports injury.
- A physical impact to the face.

Most broken noses heal on their own within about three weeks. However, it is important to follow the advice below to help reduce swelling and prevent complications.

What is a broken nose?

The nose is the most commonly broken bone in the face because it sticks out and has limited protection.

Symptoms of a broken nose may include:

- Swelling or bruising around the nose.
- Nosebleeds.
- Pain and tenderness.
- A blocked nose.
- A nose that appears misshapen or out of place.

Sometimes the nose may feel loose or unstable or make a clicking sound when touched.

How is a broken nose diagnosed?

Doctors usually diagnose a broken nose by examining the nose and surrounding area.

X-rays are not usually required because nasal bones do not show clearly on standard X-rays.

If imaging is required, it is usually to check for other facial injuries, such as injuries to the:

- Eye sockets
- Cheek bones
- Jaw.

How is a broken nose treated?

Most nasal fractures heal naturally within three weeks.

Treatment usually focuses on relieving pain and reducing swelling.

You may be advised to:

- Take simple pain relief such as paracetamol or ibuprofen
- Apply ice packs or cold compresses to the nose to reduce swelling

If you have cuts over the nose or a blood clot in the nasal septum, you may be given antibiotics.

In some cases, you may be asked to attend a follow-up appointment with an Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) specialist within 5–7 days, once swelling has reduced.

At this appointment, the doctor will decide if the nose needs to be reset with a minor procedure.

If surgery is required, it is usually performed one to two weeks after the injury.

What should I do if my nose bleeds?

If you have a nosebleed:

- Sit down and lean forward.
- Pinch the soft part of your nose firmly for 20 minutes.
- Breathe through your mouth.
- Apply a cold compress to the nose, forehead, and back of the neck.

Spit out any blood in your mouth.

Seek medical help if the bleeding does not stop.

What should I avoid while my nose heals?

While your nose is healing, avoid the following:

- Do not attempt to straighten your nose yourself if it appears misshapen.
- Avoid wearing glasses until swelling has reduced (unless necessary).
- Do not pick or blow your nose until it has healed.
- Avoid strenuous exercise for the first two weeks.
- Avoid sports where your face could be hit for at least six weeks.

When should I seek medical help?

Seek medical advice if you experience:

- Persistent pain.
- Ongoing nosebleeds.
- Fever or feeling unwell.
- Breathing problems that do not improve as swelling reduces.

You should also inform your doctor or nurse if you notice any of the following:

- Loss of consciousness, vomiting, or memory loss after the injury.
- Bleeding from the ear.
- Clear fluid draining from the nose.
- Bruising around the eyes.
- Severe or continuous nosebleeds.
- Eye pain, double vision, or blurred vision.
- Neck pain or tingling in the arms or legs.

These symptoms may indicate a more serious injury and should be assessed urgently.

General medical advice

For further medical advice you can contact:

- NHS 111 – available 24 hours a day.
- Your GP.
- An urgent treatment centre or walk-in clinic.

More information is available at: www.nhs.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have concerns about your care or require support, you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).

PALS office

Royal Sussex County Hospital

Eastern Road, Brighton BN2 5BE

Email uhsussex.pals@nhs.net

Royal Sussex County Hospital **01273 664511** or **01273 664973**

Princess Royal Hospital **01444 448678**

Contact details

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