

Patient information

Suspected Broken Nose

Ear Nose and Throat Directorate

You have been given this leaflet as you have been assessed in the Emergency Department following an injury to your nose. If you have had an associated head injury you will have been given a separate leaflet about that.

Aim of this leaflet

This leaflet gives you advice on how to manage your nasal injury at home, what to look out for, and how to arrange follow up if you need it.

What is a broken nose?

Sometimes following an injury to the nose the skin, bones or cartilages become damaged or broken. This results in swelling and sometimes a deformity of the nose. Most nose injuries heal without complications or the need for any medical intervention.

How is a broken nose diagnosed?

The diagnosis is made once the swelling has gone down as it is usually too swollen to assess in the Emergency Department. The information in this leaflet will help you to decide whether your nose has been broken or not once the swelling has settled.

What immediate treatment is needed?

Often no immediate treatment is needed.

If you have any breaks in the skin these will have been cleaned in the Emergency Department. You may have needed stitches, steri-strips (paper stiches) or tissue glue to close bigger cuts and will have been told if, when and where you need your stiches removing.

You will have also been assessed by the Emergency Department team for a septal haematoma (blood collection along the midline of your nose). If you have a septal haematoma, you will have been told this and an urgent Ear Nose and Throat clinic review will have already been made for you so you do not need to book any appointment yourself.

There is a risk of nose bleeds in the first few days after a nasal injury. If your nose does bleed you should sit upright with your head slightly forwards. Spit out any blood that comes into your throat or mouth. Apply constant pressure to the lower part of your nose (squeeze your nostrils together) for at least 10 minutes and ideally 20 minutes. If your nose continues to bleed despite this first aid treatment, please go back to the Emergency

Department. If the bleeding is very heavy or you feel faint, please call 999 and ask for an emergency ambulance.

What do I need to do or avoid doing at home?

- ✓ Use ice packs wrapped in a tea-towel on your nose for up to 15 minutes at a time several times a day to reduce the swelling.
- ✓ Take simple painkillers such as paracetamol to relieve pain. Ensure that you read the instructions carefully so that you take the correct dose.
- ✓ Keep any cuts or grazes clean to reduce the risk of infection.
- ✓ You may wear glasses if these are comfortable on the bridge of your nose.
- X Do not pick or blow your nose until it's healed as this may cause your nose to bleed.
- X Do not try to straighten your nose yourself if it has changed shape.
- X Do not do any strenuous activity for the first two weeks.
- X Do not play any contact sport or other sport where your nose may get injured for six weeks.

Once the swelling subsides or one week after your injury (whichever comes first) complete the following checklist:

Checklist	Yes	No
Has your nose changed shape?		
Has your nose felt permanently blocked since your injury?		
Has any clear fluid been running out of your nose since your injury?		
Do you have any other concerns about your injury?		

If you have answered No to the entire checklist then you will not need any further treatment.

A broken nose usually heals in around four to six weeks.

If you have answered Yes to any question in the checklist, you may have a broken nose.

Treatment options for a broken nose:

Just because a nose is broken does not mean anything has to be done about it. If you are not concerned about the appearance of your nose and are able to breathe through your nose as well as you could before the injury then it can be left alone.

Alternatively if you are concerned about the appearance or breathing through your nose the bones can sometimes be moved back into position with a short procedure called a manipulation.

This is usually performed under local anaesthetic in the Ear Nose and Throat emergency clinic on the day you attend. The procedure can also be done under general anaesthetic although this can introduce a delay. Please call the number below and arrange an appointment. In the appointment we can discuss manipulation options in more detail and consider general anaesthetic if appropriate.

Manipulation under local anaesthetic:

During this procedure the nose is injected with local anaesthetic to make it numb and we push the nasal bones back to the midline. The needle is very thin but it may still hurt as it goes through the skin and there is often a little stinging as the local anaesthetic is injected. We cannot guarantee that the bones will move if it is too long after the injury, nor can we guarantee the nose will go back to its original shape, but it often does help. Sometimes the nose may be straightened on the outside but remain blocked on the inside.

Local anaesthetic is drug-induced numbness: it is injected into the skin of the nasal bones. Like all medicines, local anaesthetics may sometimes cause side effects, as well as the effects that are needed. You may experience dizziness, blurred vision, drowsiness and occasionally loss of consciousness.

Serious side effects are rare, and include fits, low blood pressure, slowed breathing and changes in heartbeat, which may be life-threatening. If you have any concerns about any of these effects, you should discuss them with your doctor.

You are allowed to drive following an injection of local anaesthetic provided that you feel well enough.

My injury was more than three weeks ago what should I do?

Unfortunately after three weeks the bones are starting to set in position and manipulation will not be possible. If you have noticed clear fluid dripping from the nose please still contact the above number. If your nose remains blocked long term after the injury (several months later) please consult your GP for a formal referral to ENT.

I think my nose is broken and I want to book an Ear Nose and Throat emergency clinic appointment.

If you have answered Yes to the question "Has your nose changed shape?", **and** the injury was less than three weeks ago, **and** you are happy to have your nasal bones repositioned in clinic under local anaesthetic or in the operating theatre under general anaesthetic; **or** if you have answered Yes to any of the other questions in the checklist please telephone 0151 529 5067 for an appointment at Aintree or 0151 706 3534 for an appointment at Broadgreen.

When you call us, please tell us that you have suffered a broken nose and you need an emergency appointment. Please tell us the date of your injury as we ideally need to see you ten to fourteen days after the injury.

If you cannot speak to one of our team when you call you can leave a message on our answering machine, and someone will get back to you. Please leave:

Your name

Date of birth

Hospital number if you know it (this will start with RQ6) **or**, Your National Health Service number if you know it (this is your unique ten digit number)

The date of your injury

Your contact phone number (mobile is preferred).

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further information

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/broken-nose/>

Ear Nose and Throat Nurse Practitioners

Telephone number: 0151 706 2290 (Please do not phone this number for an appointment)

Textphone number: 18001 0151 706 2290 (Please do not contact this number for an appointment)

Author: Ear Nose and Throat Directorate

Review date: January 2029

All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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