

Nasal injury

Introduction

This leaflet explains how we treat and manage uncomplicated nasal injuries. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to the doctors or nurses caring for you.

How is a nasal injury diagnosed?

Signs and symptoms that would suggest a nasal injury or fractured nasal bones following trauma include pain, swelling, bruising, nose bleeding, change in the shape of the nose, or difficulty breathing through the nostrils. An X-ray is not needed for us to diagnose a nasal injury or fractured nasal bones.

How can I treat my injury?

You may take painkillers if you are in pain. Ice packs can be used to help reduce swelling (take care to wrap the ice in a towel so it does not come into direct contact with the nose). Avoid blowing your nose as this increases the risk of nose bleeds. If your nose bleeds, tilt your head forward and press on the fleshy part of your nose continually for 10 to 15 minutes. If the bleeding continues for more than 30 minutes, go to your nearest Accident and Emergency department.

Will I need any further treatment?

In many cases, the swelling settles down well by itself and further treatment is not required. However, in some cases, the fractured nasal bones shift from the original position, resulting in a change in appearance. If there is a significant and obvious deformity after the swelling has gone down, realignment of the broken fragments is possible with a procedure called 'Manipulation Under Anaesthesia (MUA) of fractured nasal bones'.

What is MUA of fractured nasal bones?

It is a day case procedure performed under general anaesthetic where the surgeon aims to push the broken and misshapen bone fragments into their original position. MUA is only of benefit where there is a significant change in nasal shape following an injury. MUA is **NOT** possible once the broken fragments have healed (usually after two weeks).

Are there alternative treatments to MUA of fractured nasal bones?

For correcting the deformity after injury, no. It is important to note that the bones and broken fragments will heal on their own during a four to six week period, regardless of surgery. If you do not wish to have surgery, the fractured nasal bones will heal in their post injury position. Aside from a change in appearance, an uncomplicated fracture of nasal bones does not lead to other medical complications. The surgery does not heal the fractured bones. It only aims to move the broken fragments in a position cosmetically preferable before the healing completes and bones are set. Once the bones are set, MUA is no longer possible.

What are the risks of MUA of fractures nasal bones?

As the procedure is carried out under general anaesthetic, both procedure specific risks and general anaesthetic risks must be carefully considered.

Please review the following web page for more information regarding general anaesthesia <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/general-anaesthesia/>

The procedure specific risks include:

- Pain, bruising, and swelling
- Nose bleed, possibly requiring nasal packing
- Failure or partial correction of nasal deformity

What care is required after MUA of fractured nasal bones?

Your nose is likely to be sore and swollen for the first couple of days and you can use painkillers and cold compresses. Movement of the broken fragments and a recurrence of the deformity is possible until the fragments have healed, so you should avoid situations where you could damage your nose again for four to six weeks. Because you will have had an anaesthetic, you should avoid driving, drinking alcohol, or signing legal documents for 24 to 48 hours.

What should I do now?

1. Follow the advice of the nurse or doctor in A&E caring for you. You are likely to be able to go home if you have only sustained an uncomplicated nasal injury.
2. 72 hours after the injury, as the swelling is improving, assess your nasal shape, and decide:
 - a. **No further action:** if there is no significant shape change or deformity, or you don't want to undergo MUA of fractured nasal bones for any other reason.
 - b. **Action:** If there is significant shape change or deformity, and you would like to be considered for MUA of fractured nasal bones, please arrange an appointment with our nasal injury clinic using the following instructions.

Our nasal injury clinic is held every Tuesday afternoon. Please contact the nasal injury co-ordinator on 020 8869 2148 to arrange an appointment.

Please note:

MUA for a nasal injury that is more than two weeks old may not be possible and you may not be considered for MUA if you arrange your appointment more than two weeks after the injury. Please contact our ENT nasal injury coordinator in a timely manner if you wish to undergo this procedure.

Who can I contact for more information?

Please contact

Department of Otolaryngology and Head & Neck Surgery,
Northwick Park Hospital,
Watford Road,
Middlesex, HA1 3UJ
Tel: 020 8869 2148

Further Information:

ENT UK Nasal Injuries:

<https://www.entuk.org/nasal-injuries-0>

General Trust information

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS is a confidential service for people who would like information, help or advice about the services provided by any of our hospitals. Please call 020 8869 5118 between 9.30am and 4.30pm or e-mail LNWH-tr.PALS@nhs.net Please note that this service does not provide clinical advice so please contact the relevant department directly to discuss any concerns or queries about your upcoming test, examination or operation.

If you would like this information in an easy to read format, large print, braille, different format or language, please contact the PALS team on 020 8869 5118 or email lnwh-tr.PALS@nhs.net We will do our best to meet your needs.