

Nose Injury

What is a nose injury?

A nose injury is an injury to any part of the nose. An injury may cause just a nosebleed or bruising, or it may break the bones in the nose. Nose injuries may also damage the nasal septum, which is the wall that divides the nose into 2 nasal passages.

What is the cause?

A nose injury is usually caused by a direct hit to the nose. For example, this may result from getting hit by someone or something, or by being in an accident.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms may include:

- Pain
- Bleeding
- Swelling
- A change in the shape of the nose
- Trouble breathing through your nose
- Grating or grinding sound caused by broken bones

How is it diagnosed?

Your healthcare provider will ask about your symptoms, activities, and medical history and examine your nose. You may have tests such as X-rays or other scans.

How is it treated?

Treatment depends on the type of injury.

- If a nosebleed does not stop with self care, see your healthcare provider. Your provider may need to put gauze packing in your nose to stop the bleeding.
- If your nose is bruised, it will heal without treatment in a few days to a few weeks.
- If your nose is broken, it may heal normally without treatment in several weeks. If your nose is broken and crooked:
 - Your healthcare provider or a specialist may straighten it right after the injury.
 - You may need surgery.
- If damage to the septum causes trouble breathing after your nose heals, you may need to have surgery.

How can I take care of myself?

If your nose is bleeding:

- Sit up and lean forward to keep blood from passing into your throat. Try not to swallow any blood. Blood in your throat could make you cough or choke.
- Pinch the soft part of your nose just below the nasal bones gently but firmly between your thumb and index finger and hold it for 5 to 10 minutes. Breathe through your mouth.
- After the bleeding stops, try not to blow your nose for several hours because the bleeding may start again. Avoid taking aspirin or other anti-inflammatory medicines, like ibuprofen or naproxen, because they may make bleeding worse. Take acetaminophen instead.
- Don't start any physical activity until the nosebleed has completely stopped. If activity causes your pain to get worse or makes your nose start bleeding again, you should stop your activity.

Put an ice pack, gel pack, or package of frozen vegetables wrapped in a cloth on the injured nose every 3 to 4 hours for up to 20 minutes at a time.

If you have broken your nose and you play a contact sport, wear a special nose and face shield for 4 to 6 weeks after the injury. You can buy a shield at a sporting goods store or have one custom made for you.

How can I help prevent a nose injury?

Nose injuries are usually caused by accidents that are not easy to prevent. If you play a sport for which protective face gear is available, such as hockey or lacrosse, make sure you wear it.

Developed by RelayHealth.

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