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Leaflet supplied by:

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July 2026
Quality Development, Foresterhill



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Injury to the nose (children and young people)

***Information for
patients and carers***

**Emergency Department
Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital**

What is this leaflet for?

This leaflet gives advice on how to care for an injured nose.

It explains:

- nasal bruising and nasal fractures are usually treated in the same way
- when follow-up may be needed after a nasal injury
- a procedure to straighten your nose under local anaesthetic

What is a nasal fracture?

Injuries to the nose are very common.

The top of the nose has two thin bones. The tip is made of cartilage.

A nasal fracture means the bones in the nose are broken.

How do we diagnose a nasal fracture?

A clinician will examine you.

We do not carry out X-rays, as they do not provide useful information.

It can be difficult to tell the difference between a fracture and bruising. Both are usually treated in the same way.

Risks of manipulation under local anaesthesia

- Your nose may not look exactly the same as before, especially if you've had previous injuries or surgery
- Sometimes we cannot move the bridge of the nose. This may be because of previous injury or surgery to your nose, or because some people heal more quickly than others and the bones have already begun to fuse
- You may feel some discomfort during the procedure
- Bleeding may occur, especially if your nose bled at the time of injury
- Rarely, bruising under the eyes

Rarely, younger children may need to have the procedure under a general anaesthetic (where the child is put to sleep). The procedure is exactly the same, but some children find it difficult to cope with the procedure while awake under a local anaesthetic.

After the procedure:

- Take pain relief (such as paracetamol or ibuprofen) if needed
- You may have small amounts of blood-stained nasal discharge. This should settle within 10 days
- You can return to work or school the next day
- Swelling and bruising should settle within 6 weeks
- Avoid contact sports for 6 weeks

How do we treat nasal fractures?

Most nasal fractures do not need treatment and will heal on their own.

However, you may need further assessment if:

- your nose looks a different shape from before
- you have reduced airflow up one or both nostrils

In these cases, an Ear Nose & Throat (ENT) specialist may be able to move your nose back into its previous shape while it heals.

How can I treat my nose at home?

- Take regular pain relief
- Try not to blow your nose for the first week
- Apply a cold pack 3 to 4 times a day during the first 24 hours (for example, frozen peas wrapped in a towel)
- Avoid strenuous activity or exercise for 72 hours
- Avoid hot and spicy food and drinks for 48 hours
- Avoid contact sports for 6 weeks

What do I do if my nose starts to bleed again?

- Apply pressure to the soft part of your nose (not the bone) for 20 minutes
- Sit forward with your mouth open so you can spit out any blood
- Apply a cold pack over the bridge of your nose

Most nosebleeds will stop after these steps.

If bleeding doesn't stop after trying this twice, return to the Paediatric Emergency Department.

When is follow-up with the ENT team required?

If the nose is clearly fractured and squint from what it was previously, the paediatric emergency department clinician will arrange follow-up with the ENT team.

An urgent clinic date and time will be provided to you before you are discharged.

The clinic appointment will be arranged no sooner than 5 days after the injury to allow the swelling to settle, but within 14 days to ensure the manipulation, if required, can still be effective.

Clinic appointment (if required)

Before your appointment:

- Please arrive 10 minutes before your appointment
- Location: Outpatients Department, Ground Floor, Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital (ENT Clinic)
- You can eat and drink as normal

During your appointment:

- You will be seen by one of the Ear, Nose and Throat specialist clinicians
- They will look at your nose to see if it needs a procedure which involves manipulating it back in shape
- Most children don't need this procedure

Explanation of the procedure

- The procedure is usually carried out under local anaesthetic at the time of the clinic appointment
- Local anaesthetic is injected at the bridge of your nose. An anaesthetic spray is used inside your nose.
- The doctor will then push your nose back into its original position
- The procedure usually takes a few minutes and you can go home soon afterwards.