

Broken nose

Information for patients with suspected broken nose (*nasal fracture*)

Background

You have been given this leaflet as you may have a broken nose (*nasal fracture*).

A broken nose is the most common type of facial fracture.

It will often heal on its own within 3 weeks; however, if you have concerns regarding the appearance of your nose or have difficulty breathing, you may be considered for a small procedure to straighten the nose.

The procedure is called Manipulation Under Anaesthesia (or *MUA*).

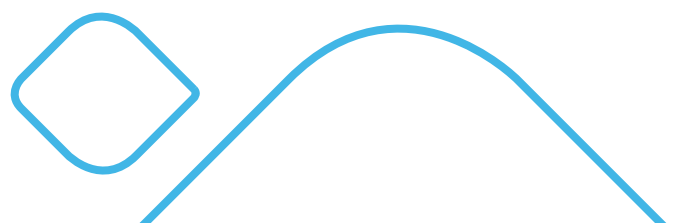
This leaflet explains what happens next, how to care for your broken nose and what to expect during Manipulation Under Anaesthesia.

What happens next?

Your details have been passed onto the Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Department at the Royal United Hospital, who will telephone you approximately 7 days after your injury.

The ENT team do not ring you before this time as it is important that the initial swelling has reduced before your symptoms are assessed.

During the telephone call, the team will talk to you about your symptoms and whether you want to undergo Manipulation Under Anaesthesia.



While you wait for the ENT team to telephone you

Do:

- Do use ice packs and regularly take simple painkillers (e.g. paracetamol, ibuprofen) to reduce swelling and ease the pain.
- Do look out for any signs of a more serious injury (see box below) and seek medical help if they arise.
- Do treat nosebleeds with simple first aid measures: pinch the fleshy part of the nose (at the bottom) firmly, lean forward and breathe through your mouth. Do not release the pressure for 10 minutes. Spit out any blood in your mouth. Ice-packs to the back of the neck can also help. After 10 minutes, check to see if your nose is still bleeding. If it is, re-apply pressure for another 5 minutes and check again. If your nose is still bleeding, seek medical attention.

Do not:

- Do not try to straighten your nose yourself.
- Do not do strenuous exercise for the first 2 weeks.
- Do not play sports in which there is a risk your face may be hit (e.g. rugby) for at least 6 weeks.

If you have broken your nose and experience any of the following, call 999 or go to A&E:

- Clear watery fluid draining from one nostril.
- Nosebleeds that do not stop following simple first aid for 15 minutes.
- A severe headache, eye pain, double vision or blurred vision.
- Purple swelling of the nasal septum (the inner wall between your nostrils).
- Neck pain/ stiffness with numbness or tingling in your arms.

These could be caused by a more serious injury that needs urgent medical attention.



Manipulation under anaesthesia

After you have spoken to a member of the ENT team over the phone, if you want to have your nose straightened, you will be booked in to attend an ENT clinic appointment in person.

The clinic appointment will be between 1 – 2 weeks after your injury (in the week or so after we have telephoned you).

The procedure must be performed within 3 weeks of your initial injury, because after this time, the bones will have started to set.

The ENT team will inform you of the date and time of your appointment during your telephone consultation.

Before the procedure

- You will be asked to come to ENT outpatients at the Royal United Hospital (Department C37).
- You can eat and drink as normal beforehand.
- Please inform the doctor of any previous reactions or allergies to anaesthetic.

During the procedure

- Local anaesthetic is injected at the bridge of your nose and an anaesthetic spray is used inside your nose.
- The doctor will then push your nose back into its original position.
- The procedure usually only takes a few minutes and you can go home soon afterwards.

After the procedure

- Take painkillers (e.g. paracetamol, ibuprofen) if your nose feels sore.
- You may experience small amounts of blood-stained nasal discharge. This should settle within 10 days.
- You can return to work/ school the next day.
- The swelling and bruising should settle over the next 6 weeks.
- You **must** avoid contact sports for 6 weeks after the procedure to let the nose heal.

Risks of Manipulation Under Anaesthesia

- **Altered appearance:** although we aim to straighten your nose, there is no guarantee that it will look exactly how it did before the injury, particularly if you have had previous injuries or surgery to your nose.
- **Failure:** sometimes we cannot move the bridge of the nose. This may be because of previous injury or surgery to the nose, or because some people heal more quickly than others and so the bones have already begun to fuse.
- **Bleeding** may occur, particularly if your nose bled during the initial injury. If this happens we can treat the bleeding in the clinic.
- **Bruising around the eyes** is rare but should settle with time.

What if I don't want Manipulation Under Anaesthesia?

Providing there is no obstruction to airflow and you are happy with the cosmetic appearance of your nose, the nasal fracture can be left untreated and you will not need to come in for the procedure.

Your nose should start to heal within three weeks but you must avoid contact sports for a minimum of 6 weeks to allow the nose to fully heal.

Please note: Manipulation Under Anaesthesia can only be attempted within 3 weeks of the initial injury and ideally between weeks 1 and 2. After this, you will not be able to have the procedure.

Contact details

Should you have any concerns following your nasal injury, or if you have not received a phone call by day 10 after your injury, please contact:

ENT Outpatients (Department C37)

Tel. 01225 824550

Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust
Combe Park, Bath, BA1 3NG

01225 428331 | www.ruh.nhs.uk

If you would like this leaflet in email form, large print, braille or another language, please contact the Patient Support and Complaints team on 01225 825656.