

Manipulation of Nasal Fracture Under Anaesthesia

Reason for Procedure

Trauma to the nose may cause a fracture or dislocation of the nasal bones, as well as a fracture to the cartilage of the nasal septum, the internal partition between the nostrils. Usually such trauma is associated with marked swelling within a few hours. This makes it difficult to decide how much the bone or cartilage has been displaced and more importantly, when it has been returned to its correct position.

Mobile fractures of the nasal bones are manipulated back into position after the swelling has gone down (usually at least 5 days after the injury) and before the bones become set in their displaced position (up to 14 days after the injury).

Preparation

Most nasal fracture manipulations are performed under general anaesthesia. This requires at least 6 hours with no food and 2 hours with no drinks prior to the operation.

Procedure

The bones are manipulated back into position using the fingers or with specially designed manipulating forceps. Once a satisfactory position is achieved an external splint may be applied. The procedure only takes a few minutes.

Results

There may be some swelling around the nasal bones for up to 10 days. There should be some improvement after this.

Alternatives

Where there is no obstruction to nasal airflow as a result of nasal deformity, nasal fracture may be left untreated as long as the cosmetic appearance is considered to be acceptable. The procedure is generally done under a general anaesthetic although local anaesthetic may be an option.

If the appearance is not satisfactory or there are symptoms of nasal obstruction further surgery may be necessary.

Benefits

- To straighten nose and improve appearance.
- To correct nasal obstruction caused by deformity.

Side Effects and Risks

Even the most careful manipulation can result in an unsatisfactory cosmetic result. Formal corrective surgery may be necessary at a later date (septorhinoplasty). Nasal fractures can occur in conjunction with other facial fractures, which may require further surgery.

Post-Procedural Care

Summary

Fractured noses can be manipulated to improve the appearance of the nose and prevent obstructive symptoms in the nose. It may be done under local anaesthesia but usually requires a general anaesthetic. It is a simple and short procedure. If the result is not satisfactory there is an option of further surgery.

Discharge information

Contact sports should not be played for 6 weeks following the surgery.