

Nasal Fractures

Fractures of the nose (broken nose) are the most common fractures of the face. Nasal fractures result from trauma to the nose. Common causes are contact sports such as basketball or falls. Initially after the injury, there is usually a nosebleed, which subsides with time and compressing the nose. Individuals are often seen in the emergency room to help with control of nose bleed and initial evaluation.

Typically, there is significant swelling of the nose after injury, which subsides over the first week. The determination that the nose is broken can be completed by clinical evaluation. In many cases, there is minimal change in the external appearance of the nose, and further intervention is not needed. The fracture line will heal with time.

In other cases, there is significant change in the position of the nose, which causes a noticeable change in the external appearance of the nose. This can be accompanied with difficulty breathing through the nose, caused by concurrent fracture of the septum resulting in deviated nasal septum. In these cases where there is change to the external appearance of the nose and/or blockage in breathing through the nose, surgical treatment will likely be needed to realign the nose to its natural position and improve breathing.

Treatment for broken nose is also dependent on timing of evaluation after injury. Within the first 2 weeks after injury, a brief operation can be performed to realign the nose if there is change in the external appearance from the injury. If more than 2 weeks have passed, lengthier surgeries such a rhinoplasty may be needed to allow the nose to return to a more natural appearance.