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NASAL FRACTURES AND REPAIR

General information:

- ◆ The nose is made up of both bone and cartilage
- ◆ The nasal bones are connected to each other and the nasal cartilage
- ◆ Trauma to the nose can result in fracture
- ◆ Fracture of the nasal bones is generally associated with significant bleeding, pain, bruising of the area and under the eyes and nasal obstruction

Evaluation

- ◆ Nasal evaluation generally needs to take place immediately at the time of the injury or approximately 72 hours after injury as swelling goes down.
- ◆ Nasal evaluation will include evaluation of the aesthetic quality of the nose as well as the inner nose, specifically the nasal septum.
- ◆ In some cases associated fractures will need to be evaluated; this is generally done with a CT scan.
- ◆ Lastly, evaluation for a rare associated injury called a cerebro-spinal fluid leak will need to be evaluated.

Treatment:

- ◆ If the fracture is not displaced and the septum is not damaged/moved, no intervention will be required.
- ◆ If there is minimal displacement, the fracture can often be reduced/corrected in the office under local anesthesia.
- ◆ If there is significant displacement or complex fractures, operative repair of the fracture may be required.
- ◆ Generally this is done under general anesthesia and does not require any incisions. On occasion incisions are necessary for complex fracture repair.
- ◆ A nasal splint and nasal packing may be placed after the fracture has been repaired.

Post treatment instructions:

- ◆ As with all fractures, nasal fractures take a full six weeks to heal.
- ◆ If a splint or packing is used, it generally is removed 3-5 days after placement.
- ◆ If nasal splints come off sooner, they are not replaced-they merely offer some added protection.
- ◆ Avoid nose blowing and further nasal trauma (especially diving during the summer months) for a full 3 weeks. Gentle nose blowing at that time is ok.
- ◆ After repair, it is common for swelling and bruising to recur. Treat this with ice.
- ◆ Pain medication is provided for post repair comfort.
- ◆ A congested/stuffy nose may persist for up to 4-6 weeks post fracture or repair. Use of nasal saline can help clear nasal crusting/secretions. Our recommendation is for 3-4 sprays each nostril 3-4 times per day.
- ◆ As with all treatments, complications include risk of infection, bleeding and inadequate/incomplete reduction. Follow up is required to insure a good outcome.