



Fracture of the eye socket (orbital fracture)

You came to the emergency department after an injury to your face. Tests showed a break in one of the thin bones around your eye, called an orbital fracture. Your eye and vision were checked. This sheet explains how to care for it at home and the warning signs to watch for.

What is it?

The eye sits in a bony socket. A hard blow, such as a punch, fall or ball, can crack the thin floor or wall of this socket. You may have bruising, swelling, a numb cheek or upper lip, or double vision when looking up or down. Many of these fractures heal without surgery. Some need an operation after the swelling settles.

Looking after yourself at home

- Do not blow your nose for at least 2 weeks, or until your doctor says it is safe.
- If you need to sneeze, keep your mouth open to reduce pressure.
- Hold a cold pack wrapped in a cloth on the area for 15 to 20 minutes at a time for the first 2 days.
- Sleep with your head raised on extra pillows to help swelling go down.
- Avoid bending, heavy lifting and hard exercise until your follow-up visit.
- Do not fly or dive until your doctor says it is safe.

Medicines

- For pain, you may take paracetamol unless your doctor told you not to. Follow the packet or your doctor's instructions.
- Ask your doctor before taking ibuprofen, as it can increase bruising.
- Take any antibiotics or nose sprays you were given exactly as prescribed, and finish the course.

Follow-up

- Go to your eye or face specialist appointment within the time you were given, usually within 1 week.
- If you have no appointment, see your family doctor or health centre within 2 to 3 days.

Come back to the emergency department or call an ambulance straight away if:

- Loss of vision, blurred vision or a dark curtain over your sight
- New or worsening double vision
- Severe pain in or behind the eye, or pain on moving the eye
- The eye is pushed forward, or swelling gets rapidly worse
- Bleeding from the nose that will not stop, or clear fluid from the nose
- Repeated vomiting, severe headache or drowsiness



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This leaflet is general information to support the advice your doctor or nurse gave you today. It does not replace their advice. If you are worried, seek medical help.

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