



# Student Health Center

## UNC Wilmington

### INSTRUCTION SHEET: BROKEN NOSE

The Student Health Provider has diagnosed a fracture (break) of your nose. A broken nose is usually not a serious problem unless other associated injuries are present. The main concerns with a nasal fracture are breathing ability and long-term cosmetic appearance.

Your nose may appear misshapen at present. The nose may look pushed to one side, or larger in one area. The abnormal appearance can be due to the nasal bone being pushed out of position, or it may be due to swelling of the soft tissues alone (without bony displacement). Regardless of the cause, immediate treatment to correct the abnormal appearance is not indicated.

Instead, treatment of a broken nose is delayed four to seven days, until swelling is decreased. At that time, examine your nose in a mirror: If distortion is gone, then the cause was soft tissue swelling; treatment is unnecessary. If deformity is still present, the nasal bone may be out of place; an ENT (Ear, Nose, and Throat) doctor should evaluate your condition to see if the cosmetic appearance can be improved.

#### MEASURES YOU SHOULD TAKE TO HELP TREAT YOUR BROKEN NOSE:

- 1- Rest. Avoid strenuous exertion or bumping your nose.
- 2- Apply cold packs to the nose off-and-on the first 48 hours after injury. Cold, better than anything else, helps reduce swelling.
- 3- Over-the-counter pain medications can relieve discomfort associated with a broken nose. Acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen, or naproxen can be taken, depending on individual preference.
- 4- Call as soon as possible for an appointment with an ENT doctor; schedule the appointment four to seven days after the injury occurred. Be sure to tell the office you are referred from the Student Health Center for treatment of a broken nose. If you have any questions about the appearance, ability to breathe through the nose, or other problems with your nose, be sure to keep the appointment. If you are satisfied your nose is normal in appearance and function, cancel the appointment.
- 5- Should you experience severe pain or persistent bleeding, see your personal/referral ENT doctor promptly. If you are unable to obtain an appointment, call/return to the Student Health Center.