

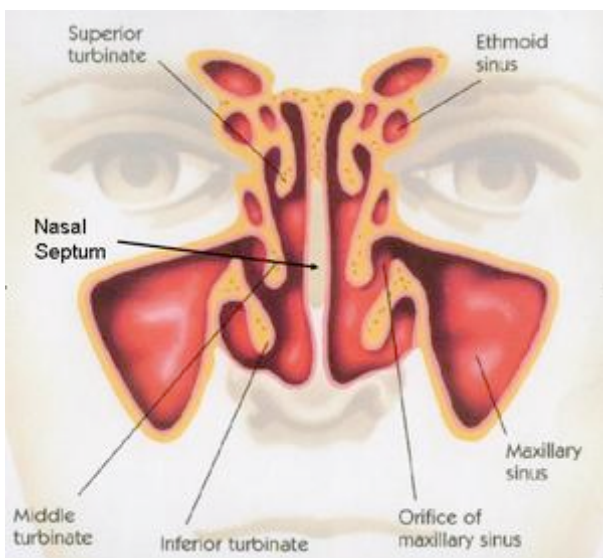
A DISCUSSION OF THE BLOCKED NOSE

What is a Blocked Nose ?

Having a blocked nose is extremely common. Often this is the result of a common cold (acute rhinosinusitis). A longer-lasting blockage of the nose due to swelling of its lining occurs very commonly in Australia, this is usually called "Hay Fever". Hay fever is a seasonal type of rhinitis, and is due to allergy to grass and tree pollens. Patients react to the pollen which causes a swelling of the lining of the nose. They also have a marked watery nasal discharge and sneezing. Allergies can be tested for and treated.

Allergic type rhinitis symptoms can be present all-year round. This type of rhinitis is called perennial rhinitis. In some patients swellings form inside the nose from the constant irritation, these are called polyps. Due to the shape of the inside of the nose, these swellings become pear-shaped, and gradually get bigger, causing nose blockage.

The nose is divided into left and right sides by the nasal septum. This septum is not always in the midline. If it is over to one side, it is referred to as a deviated septum. This problem can either cause or make worse any blockage of the nose. Occasionally trauma to the nose or previous surgery may make some parts of the nose collapse, these problems usually require surgery to correct. The Norwest ENT Group offers new surgical techniques that enable minimal discomfort, swelling and reduced time off work/school.



Why does a Blocked Nose occur ?

We do not really know why some people become allergic to things. However, allergies tend to run in the family: there is often a family history of hay fever, asthma or eczema. The deviation of the septum may be due to some previous injury, or simply the way in which the nose has grown. Collapse of the other nasal structures may have occurred from trauma, previous nasal surgery or be development in nature (just the way the nose has grown).

Treatment for a Blocked Nose

There have been great advances in the treatment for blocked nose over the past 10 years. We can now diagnose allergies very accurately and treat them, your bodies response to allergens can also be changed over time by immunotherapy.

If your problem is more due to there being problems with the internal anatomy of your nose, nasal surgery may be considered. A deviated septum which is contributing to the blockage may be straightened out. This operation is called a septoplasty or septal reconstruction. Turbinates are structures on the side wall of the nose which can swell up with prolonged rhinitis. These turbinates can be surgically reduced in size. Partial turbinate removal and diathermy (a type of cautery) are often used. If nasal polyps cannot be controlled by use of medical treatment, they may be removed too. The operation is most often done through the nose. Sometimes the surgeon will suggest an operation to clear the sinuses as well. This may include endoscopic (keyhole) sinus surgery. Surgery cannot offer a cure for polyps. There is a marked tendency for them to recur. Despite this, surgery can offer great relief. It is important to note that the treatment of your blocked nose depends on a correct diagnosis of the cause. At Norwest ENT Group we will correctly diagnose your nasal obstruction using the latest available technology and clearly outline a plan with you for correcting the problem.