SYMPTOM

Broad nasal bridge

A broad nasal bridge means the upper part of the nose between the eyes looks wider than expected.

WHAT IT FEELS LIKE
Usually nothing; the upper nose looks wider

WHERE IT IS FELT
Upper nose between the eyes

MOST COMMON CAUSES
Family traits, facial growth, temporary swelling after injury

WHEN IT IS URGENT
New painful swelling with fever or vision changes

USUALLY LASTS
Lifelong if inherited; shorter when caused by swelling

SEE A DOCTOR IF
New, changing, painful, or accompanied by other concerns

Overview

The nasal bridge is the upper part of your nose, between your eyes. A broad nasal bridge means this area looks wider than expected for your face.

This is usually a physical feature rather than an uncomfortable symptom. It may run in families or reflect normal differences in facial shape. In babies and young children, the bridge can also look broad and flat because the nose is still developing.

A broad bridge is not a diagnosis. Its meaning depends on whether it has always been present, appeared after an injury, or occurs with swelling or other health concerns.

What it may feel or look like

A naturally broad nasal bridge usually does not hurt or affect breathing. You may notice that:

In babies, a broad or flat bridge and skin folds at the inner corners of the eyes can make the eyes look crossed. This is called pseudostrabismus, meaning false crossed eyes. The eyes are actually aligned. Because true eye misalignment can look similar, an eye examination is

appropriate if you are concerned.

A new change may feel different. Swelling can cause tenderness, pressure, redness, bruising, nasal blockage, or pain when the area is touched.

- The upper nose looks wide or flat
- The eyes appear farther apart
- The feature is similar to that of other family members
- Its appearance changes with age or facial growth

Common causes

Common causes

Normal facial variation is the most common explanation. Nose shape is influenced by inherited traits and ancestry, and there is a wide range of healthy facial appearances.

Age also affects the bridge. Babies and young children often have a lower, flatter bridge than adults. The nose and surrounding facial bones change as the child grows.

Temporary swelling can make the bridge look broader. Possible reasons include a minor injury, irritation, an insect bite, or inflammation associated with nasal and sinus symptoms.

Less common causes

A previous nasal fracture may change the bridge's shape, especially if the bones healed in a different position. A cyst, other growth, or long-lasting inflammation can also create a new or uneven widening.

A broad bridge can be one feature of some conditions present from birth, including certain genetic or craniofacial conditions. "Craniofacial" means affecting the skull and face. A broad bridge alone does not show that someone has one of these conditions. Assessment is more useful when there are other findings, such as differences in growth, development, hearing, vision, or the shape of other body parts.

Causes needing prompt attention

An infection of the skin or tissues around the nose and eyes can cause painful, red, warm swelling, sometimes with fever. A significant facial injury can also cause sudden widening, bruising, bleeding, or difficulty breathing through the nose.

When to seek medical care

Arrange a routine appointment if the nasal bridge has recently changed, remains swollen, becomes painful, or affects breathing. It is also reasonable to ask for an assessment if you are concerned about a child's growth, development, hearing, vision, or other facial features.

Seek same-day medical care for:

Call emergency services for trouble breathing, sudden loss of vision, severe uncontrolled bleeding, loss of consciousness, or a major face or head injury.

A broad nasal bridge that has always been present, causes no symptoms, and resembles a family trait usually does not need urgent assessment.

- New painful, red, or warm swelling, especially with fever
- Swelling spreading toward an eye
- New double vision or pain when moving an eye
- A recent injury followed by marked swelling or a changed nose shape
- Persistent bleeding or worsening nasal blockage after an injury

How the cause is found

A healthcare professional will ask when you first noticed the broad bridge and whether its appearance has changed. They may ask about family features, recent injuries, pain, fever, nasal blockage, vision, hearing, and development.

The examination may include looking at the nose from different angles and checking for tenderness, swelling, skin changes, airflow, or eye alignment. In children, the bridge is considered in relation to age and overall facial growth.

Tests are often unnecessary when the bridge is a stable, painless feature. Imaging may be considered after a significant injury or if there is concern about a growth beneath the skin. If several differences present from birth occur together, a clinician may suggest a genetics assessment. This reviews personal and family history and does not assume that a genetic condition is present.

Treatment and self-care

A naturally broad nasal bridge does not require treatment. No exercise, massage, or home device can safely reshape the nasal bones.

For mild swelling after a minor injury, a cool pack wrapped in cloth may help with discomfort.

Avoid pressing firmly on the bridge or trying to straighten the nose yourself. Seek medical advice if the shape has changed, breathing is difficult, or symptoms are worsening.

Treatment for persistent swelling depends on its cause. An infection, fracture, inflammatory condition, or growth requires a different approach, so examination should come before treatment.

Some people consider cosmetic treatment because of how the bridge looks. This is a personal choice rather than a medical requirement. A qualified specialist can discuss realistic results, timing, and risks. In children, facial growth is an important part of that discussion.

What to expect

A broad bridge caused by inherited facial shape is usually lifelong, although its proportions may change as the face grows or ages. In children, the bridge may become more prominent as the nose develops.

Swelling from a minor injury or irritation should gradually settle. The timing depends on the amount of swelling and its cause. Swelling that persists, worsens, becomes uneven, or returns should be assessed.

If a broad bridge occurs with other developmental or physical differences, follow-up will focus on those concerns rather than the bridge alone. The outlook depends on the underlying cause, if one is found.

Common questions

Is a broad nasal bridge a disease?

No. It is a description of facial appearance. It may be a normal inherited feature or, less often, one part of another condition.

Does it affect breathing?

A naturally broad bridge usually does not. Breathing difficulty may point to swelling, an injury, or a separate problem inside the nose.

Why does my baby's nose look broad and flat?

Babies naturally have different facial proportions from adults. A low, broad bridge is often part of normal early facial development. Mention concerns about eye alignment, breathing, feeding, growth, or development at a routine child health visit.

Can glasses make a broad bridge worse?

Glasses do not widen the nasal bones. Poorly fitting frames may leave pressure marks or slide down. An optician can adjust the bridge and nose pads for a more comfortable fit.

Can photographs confirm whether the bridge is unusually broad?

Not reliably. Camera angle, lighting, facial expression, and lens distortion can change how the nose looks. An in-person assessment is more useful when the feature is new or linked with other concerns.

Sources

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