

Nasal polyps

Nasal polyps are painless soft growths inside your nose. They're not usually serious, but they can keep growing and block your nose if not treated.

Symptoms of nasal polyps

Symptoms of nasal polyps include:

- a blocked or runny nose
- post-nasal drip (a constant need to swallow)
- a reduced sense of taste
- [a reduced sense of smell](#)
- [nosebleeds](#)
- [snoring](#)

Nasal polyps can sometimes feel like a [cold](#). But colds often clear up within a few days. Nasal polyps do not get better unless they're treated.

If your polyps block your sinuses (the air pockets around your nose), you may also have symptoms of [sinusitis](#).

See your GP if:

- you're worried you may have nasal polyps
- you have difficulty breathing
- your symptoms are getting worse
- you notice changes to your sense of smell

Cause of nasal polyps

It's not clear what causes nasal polyps.

Certain things can increase your risk of getting nasal polyps, such as:

- asthma
- a bad reaction to taking aspirin

Nasal polyps are rare in children.

Treating nasal polyps

Your GP can often tell if you have nasal polyps by looking inside your nose.

If you have nasal polyps, they may prescribe steroid nose drops or a spray to shrink the polyps.

They may prescribe steroid tablets for up to 2 weeks if:

- your polyps are large
- nose drops and sprays did not work

Follow the advice of your GP about how to use your medicine and for how long to take it.

A pharmacist can help with nasal polyps

After seeing your GP, a pharmacist can recommend:

- steroid nasal sprays that do not need a GP prescription
- salt water washes (called a saline rinse or nasal douche) to help unblock your nose

► [Making a salt water wash at home](#)

Surgery to remove polyps

If there's no improvement after about 10 weeks, your GP may suggest referral to an ENT (ear nose and throat) surgeon who may consider surgery to remove the polyps.

Most people who have surgery see an improvement. But it's common for polyps to grow back, usually within a few years.

You may need to keep using a steroid nasal spray after surgery to stop the polyps from returning quickly.

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