

Nosebleeds

Most nosebleeds are a nuisance, but they can be frightening. Bleeding from the nose can happen easily because the blood vessels and tissues of the nose are very delicate.

What Causes Nosebleeds

Many small and delicate blood vessels (capillaries) are in the lining of the nose.

These can break and bleed easily.

- Home heating systems may dry the air in your home. This may dry the lining of the nose and cause bleeding.
- If your nose is hit or if it is scratched inside, the vessels may break and cause your nose to bleed. The most common cause is “picking” the nose.
- If a blood vessel inside your nose is very close to the surface, blowing your nose too hard or picking your nose may make it bleed. Frequent nosebleeds within a few days are usually from the same spot where the clot has formed and is then pulled off.
- Children with frequent colds or allergies may rub their nose often which can cause the vessels to break and bleed.



Picture 1 Hold your nostrils closed for 5 minutes.

How to Stop a Nosebleed

Here are a few things you can do to stop a nosebleed. If these do not stop your nosebleed, call your doctor for advice.

- **Sit up and lean your head forward slightly (Picture 1). Do not lie down or lean back.**
- Try to be quiet and calm. Talking, laughing or crying may cause more bleeding.
- With your thumb and forefinger, hold your nostrils tightly closed at the soft part of the nose just below the nasal bone and breathe through your mouth (Picture 1).
- Hold the nostrils closed for 5 minutes. Time this with a clock or watch. If the bleeding has not stopped after a full 5 minutes, hold the nostrils closed again for 5 more minutes.

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How to Stop a Nosebleed, continued

- If bleeding does not stop after the second 5 minutes of pinching the nostrils, call your doctor.
- Wet a washcloth or hand towel with cool water. Wring it out and press firmly to the nose and cheeks.
- A cotton ball soaked in Afrin[®] or neosynephrine can be put in the nostril if your doctor says it is all right.
- Do not blow your nose or remove crusts for several hours. If you need to blow your nose, do it **very gently**. Either blowing or wiping your nose may cause fresh bleeding.
- If any blood collects in your mouth, spit it out. Swallowing a large amount of blood may cause you to vomit blood or blood clots.
- Sometimes if the bleeding is frequent, your doctor may recommend nasal cautery. This is when the vessel is sealed with silver nitrate, electric current or laser to stop the bleeding. This can be done in the doctor's office or the Operating Room.

How to Help Prevent Nosebleeds

- Fingernails should be cut short to prevent scratching the inside of the nose.
- Apply a **very thin** coating of Vaseline[®] inside each nostril once a day for 2 weeks during the dry season. This will keep the lining of the nose moist.
- Use a cool vaporizer in your bedroom at night, especially during the winter. Be sure to keep the vaporizer clean.
- Blow your nose gently.

More about Nosebleeds

- Usually, nosebleeds do not cause enough blood loss to be serious in children who are otherwise healthy.
- If your child takes aspirin or uses nasal sprays for allergies or any *anticoagulant* (anti-clotting) medicine, be sure to tell the doctor how often the nosebleeds happen.

Call Your Doctor If:

- You cannot stop the bleeding after 10 minutes of pressure.
- You have a nosebleed after an accident or being hit in the face.
- Your child has a clotting disorder and you can't stop the nosebleeds.

If you have any questions, be sure to ask your doctor or nurse, or call _____