

Nosebleeds

There are many tiny blood vessels lining the inside walls of your nose. These blood vessels keep the air you breathe in warm and moist. Since these delicate blood vessels lie close to the surface, they are easily injured and cause a nosebleed. The medical name for nosebleeds is epistaxis.

Having a nosebleed is a common problem in children but less common in adults.

What causes nosebleeds?

Dryness and nose picking are the 2 most common causes of nosebleeds. Other causes include:

- forceful nose blowing
- hot air
- cold temperatures
- low humidity
- allergies
- chemical fumes
- bleeding disorders
- smoke
- infections
- certain drugs such as aspirin

Nosebleeds can be minor or a serious medical emergency. It is important that your doctor know about your nosebleeds. If the blood from your nose starts to go down your throat, you may need medical attention to control the bleeding.

What do I do if I have a nosebleed?

- Most of the time nosebleeds are not serious and can be treated at home.
- Remain calm. Excitement makes your heart beat faster and your blood pressure to go up. This can make the bleeding worse.

- Start by sitting down and lean slightly forward.
- Leaning forward prevents you from swallowing your blood. Swallowing blood can cause nausea and vomiting.



- Next, place your thumb and index finger between the bony ridge and the end of your nose and squeeze.
- You can also use a nose clamp.
- Do not clamp your nose for more than 10 minutes at a time to prevent damage to the nose.
- You may need to breathe through your mouth.
- After 10 minutes, check to see if the bleeding has stopped. If it has not, hold it for another 10 minutes.
- This works well in most cases because most of the bleeding starts just inside the opening of the nose.



- If your child is having a nosebleed, place your child on your lap, tilt forward and clamp nose.



- Have your child breathe through the mouth. Clamp nose for 10 minutes at a time.



What else can I do?

If you have nosebleeds often that don't need medical attention, here are other things you can use:

- Blow your nose gently to remove mucus and clots.
 - Always have supplies ready such as tissues, nose clamp, dark/red washcloth, and plastic bags.
 - Use a nose clamp for a maximum of 10 minutes at a time.
 - Keep a record of your nosebleeds.
 - Avoid picking your nose and keep fingernails short.
 - Apply ice to your nose and cheeks.
 - Make sure you rest after your nosebleed has stopped.
 - Apply moisturizing ointment or cream inside your nose.
 - Avoid spicy foods on the day of your nosebleed.
 - If your child has a nosebleed: encourage your child not to cry and check for any objects in your child's nose. For comfort, suck on a popsicle.
 - When the bleeding does stop, do not pick your nose or bend over for 12 hours. Do not do any activities which will cause you to start bleeding again. Gently apply a moisturizing ointment.
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How can I prevent nosebleeds?

- Use a humidifier in your daily environment.
- Keep the temperature low (16-18°C) in bedrooms.
- Breathe in moist air from a warm shower.
- Increase your fluid intake.
- Use a saline nasal spray 4 times a day. (Ask your pharmacist).
- Apply a water-soluble nose gel 3 times a day. (Ask your pharmacist).
- Apply Polysporin[®] or Vaseline[®] to the openings in your nose openings before going to bed.

To help prevent nosebleeds:

- Do not blow the nose harshly.
- Do not bend over for a long period of time.
- Do not smoke or inhale second hand smoke.

For your child: keep your child's fingernails short, discourage nose picking.

Try to keep your child from putting anything into their nose and avoid harsh nose blowing

How to treat a nosebleed

Non-prescriptive options:

- nasal spray
- Claritin[®]
- NasalCEASE[®]
- nose clamp
- Bactroban Nasal[®] ointment
- Polysporin[®] ointment
- Neosporin[®] ointment
- Vaseline[®]

Prescription options:

- Desmopressin acetate/Octostim[®] (nasal spray or injectable)
- Tranexamic acid/Cyklokapron[®] (pills)
- Creams/gels can be prescribed to help stop bleeds

Ask your doctor about these options.

When do I seek medical attention?

Seek medical attention if you:

- are bleeding for more than 20 minutes.
 - are vomiting blood or “coffee ground” looking material.
 - are pale, feel dizzy, have headaches or are short of breath.
 - have frequent small nosebleeds which easily stop but continue for weeks.
 - have an underlying medical condition that causes you to bleed easily.
 - are concerned about the amount of blood loss.
 - have any questions or concerns.
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