

Emergency Department Nose Bleed/Epistaxis

General Information

Nosebleeds often look frightening, but most of them are not serious and can be easily treated. A nosebleed may be caused by injury to the nose, infection, an object in the nose, mechanical damage (from picking your nose) or high blood pressure. Dry mucous membranes may be a contributing factor.

Instructions

1. **DO NOT** blow your nose until 2 days after the bleeding stops. **DO NOT** pick your nose or put anything into it. These actions may dislodge any blood clots.
2. If the bleeding starts again, sit up, lean forward and breathe through your mouth. Pinch the soft part of your nose tightly for 10 minutes without letting go.
3. Use a humidifier or vaporizer in your home. This will increase the moisture to your mucous membranes to prevent future nosebleeds.
4. For the next few days, elevate your head on several pillows when lying down.
5. **DO NOT** use aspirin or drink alcohol for 2–3 days. These may cause more bleeding.
6. Avoid hot drinks or heavy lifting and straining for the next few days.
7. If a pack or balloon was put in your nose by the doctor, you will need to go to your family doctor or return to Emergency within 24-48 hours to have it removed. Follow the instructions of the emergency room doctor. If part of any gauze packing starts to come out of the nostril, either cut it off or gently tuck it back in. **DO NOT** pull it out.
8. If there is no packing in your nose, put a small amount of petroleum jelly (eg. Vaseline) inside the nostril twice a day for 4–5 days. This will help relieve dryness and irritation.
9. You may take a shower the day after you get home. Avoid using hot water as it can increase the chance of bleeding.
10. Do not use a straw to drink as the sucking motion may cause bleeding.

Contact your Family Doctor if:

- You continue to have frequent nose bleeds

Return to Emergency if any of the following develop:

- Bleeding cannot be stopped.
- If your nose has packing or a balloon, and you get fever or bad pain in or around your nose.

For more information or questions contact HealthLinkBC at 811.

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