

Caring for a Nosebleed

When you get a nosebleed (epistaxis), the blood vessels in the nose break, causing blood to come out of one or both nostrils. There are many possible causes of nosebleeds.

Once a nosebleed has been stopped, it may take a week for the blood vessels in the nose to heal completely. Follow these important steps to prevent and treat a nosebleed.



Preventing another bloody nose

- Avoid blowing your nose for at least two days. Once two days have passed, blow very gently.
- Avoid rubbing or picking your nose.
- Keep your mouth open if you sneeze. This way, the force of sneeze goes through your mouth, not your nose.
- Sleep with your head elevated on at least two pillows
- Avoid lifting heavy objects, bending over or straining when having a bowel movement.
- Avoid medications containing aspirin or ibuprofen. Common examples include Advil[®] and Motrin[®]. Read labels to make sure the combination doesn't contain aspirin. Use Tylenol[®] for pain.

If a nosebleed starts again

- If bleeding starts again, place cotton soaked in Afrin[®] (oxymetazaline) in the nostril that is bleeding. Afrin is a nasal decongestant that helps constrict blood vessels. If you don't have Afrin, squeeze the nostrils tightly for 10 minutes.
- If this doesn't help, squeeze the nostrils for at least five more minutes. Sit up and lean forward

while squeezing your nostrils. You may want to have a basin below you nose and mouth for the blood to drip into. This will keep you from swallowing the blood. You can also measure how much blood you actually lose.

- If the bleeding continues, notify your doctor or visit the nearest emergency room. If you are a patient at National Jewish Health call 303-388-1355. Choose option 4.

Visit our website for more information about support groups, clinical trials and lifestyle information.

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