Nosebleed

Nosebleeds are not usually a sign of anything serious. Anyone can get them, but they're most common in children. You can treat most nosebleeds at home.

How to stop a nosebleed

Do not lie down if you have a nosebleed.

To help stop a nosebleed:

- lean forward
- pinch the soft part of your nose just above your nostrils for 10 to 15 minutes
- breathe through your mouth

Placing an ice pack or a bag of frozen vegetables wrapped in a tea towel to your neck or nose or chewing ice may also help reduce the bleeding from your nose.

Go to an emergency department (ED) if:

- your nosebleed lasts longer than 10 to 15 minutes
- the bleeding is heavy
- you swallow a lot of blood that makes you vomit
- the bleeding started after a blow to your head
- you feel weak or dizzy
- you have difficulty breathing

See a GP if:

- a child under 2 has a nosebleed
- you're taking a blood-thinning medicine, such as warfarin
- you get nosebleeds often
- you have symptoms of anaemia, such as a faster heartbeat (palpitations), shortness of breath and pale skin

- you have a condition that means your blood cannot clot properly, such as haemophilia

Causes of a nosebleed

The inside of your nose is delicate and nosebleeds happen when it's damaged.

This can be caused by:

- picking your nose
- blowing your nose too hard
- the inside of your nose being too dry because the air temperature has changed

Nosebleeds that need medical attention can come from deeper inside the nose. These usually affect adults.

They can be caused by:

- an injury to your nose
- conditions that affect the blood vessels or how the blood clots - such as high blood pressure, atherosclerosis, or hereditary haemorrhagic telangiectasia (HHT).
- certain medicines, like warfarin

Sometimes the cause of a nosebleed is unknown.

Certain people are more prone to getting nosebleeds, including:

- children
- elderly people
- pregnant women

Medical treatment

There are 2 main treatments that a doctor may use to stop your nose bleeding.

Cautery

A doctor will seal where the blood is coming from. They will press a stick with a special chemical on it to stop the bleeding.

Nasal packing

A doctor will pack your nose with sponges to stop the bleeding. You may need to stay in hospital for a day or two. This treatment is used if cautery is not possible.

When a nosebleed stops

For 24 hours after a nosebleed, try not to irritate your nose. This might start another nosebleed.

Don't

- ✖ do not blow your nose
- ✖ do not pick your nose
- ✖ do not drink hot drinks or alcohol
- ✖ do not do any heavy lifting or intense exercise
- ✖ do not pick any scabs inside your nose

A blood clot may come out of your nose after a nosebleed stops. This is normal and nothing to worry about. Wipe it away with a tissue.

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