NOSEBLEEDS

PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET

Blood vessels in the nose can become irritated or damaged for many reasons. Nosebleeds, also called epistaxis, can happen anytime and may be more common in people who take anticoagulants. Anticoagulants (also called blood thinners) are used to treat and prevent blood clots.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A NOSEBLEED

- Sit upright or stand and stay calm.
- Lean and tilt your head forward so that blood doesn't pool in your throat.
- Gently pinch the soft part of your nostrils continuously and hold for 10 to 15 minutes. This applies pressure to the blood vessels and helps to stop blood flow. Only breathe through your mouth while doing this.

If the nosebleed stops after 10 to 15 minutes, do not blow or irritate for a couple of days.

Nasal decongestants (eg, oxymetolazine) make the blood vessels constrict and reduce blood flow, thereby helping to stop a nosebleed. Talk to your pharmacist to see if a nasal decongestant is right for you.

If you have had nosebleeds before, consider spraying a nasal decongestant into the side that is bleeding. Then softly pinch the soft part of your nostrils (again) for 10 to 15 minutes. If this does not stop the bleeding, soak a cotton ball with the nasal decongestant, place this in your bleeding nostril, and continue to pinch the soft part of your nostrils for another 10 to 15 minutes.



WHAT NOT TO DO

Do not lie down or lean your head back. This causes blood to pool in your throat and can upset your stomach if you swallow it.

Do not plug your nose with a tissue as removing it may also remove any clot that has formed and cause your nose to bleed again.

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HOW TO PREVENT A NOSEBLEED

Keep your nose moist, especially during winter months or in dry climates.

- Use a humidifier
- Moisturize your nose using a nasal saline solution or nasal lubricant. Your local pharmacist can help you choose a product.
- Do not pick your nose or insert any foreign bodies in your nose.

WHEN TO CONTACT YOUR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL

Seek emergency treatment (go the the emergency room) if:

- A nosebleed happens after an head injury
- During a nosebleed you feel dizzy, lightheaded or short of breath
- Your nose is still bleeding heavily after pinching your nostrils continuously for 30 minutes
- You have very heavy bleeding such that blood is running down your throat or flowing constantly out of your nostril

Be sure to tell your healthcare professional if you have frequent nosebleeds despite following these tips. If you continue to have nosebleeds, you should follow up with your family doctor or nurse practitioner as they may be able to treat the area locally with cauterization. Alternatively, you may need an evaluation by an Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) specialist.

TAKE AWAY MESSAGE

- Nosebleeds are a nuisance but are usually easy to manage at home.
- Keep your nose moist to help prevent nosebleeds.
- Don't pick or irritate your nose.

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