

## Nosebleed (Epistaxis)

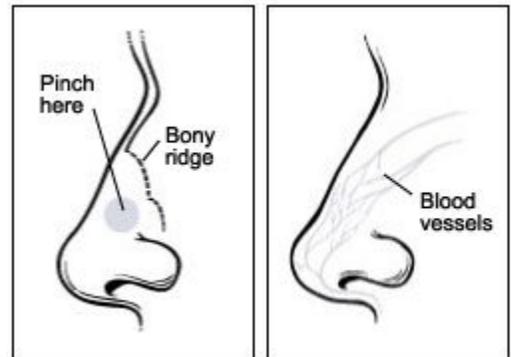
Occasionally, nose bleeding can be due to a serious underlying medical condition. However, most of the time, nose bleeding is benign. There are many blood vessels on the nasal septum, which can be easily ruptured due to friction caused by nose blowing and rubbing. More than 90% of the time, trauma from friction is the cause. Treatment of underlying allergies and dryness can reduce nosebleeds.

**Factors that predispose to nosebleeds include:**

- Nose blowing, picking, rubbing.
- Clotting disorders
- Medications: common blood thinners are aspirin and Coumadin or Warfarin. These medications prevent the body from properly forming blood clots which stop bleeding.
- Nasal fractures or trauma.
- Rarely, intra-nasal tumors, masses, and ulcers.
- High blood pressure.
- Dry air.

**Treatment may include:**

- Humidification and /or nasal saline sprays or gels.
- Epistaxis precautions shown in the table below.
- Moisturizers such as Bacitracin ointment or Vaseline nightly.
- Cauterization or nasal packing, if actively bleeding.
  - Cauterization burns and seals a blood vessel
  - Nasal packing seals a blood vessel by putting pressure on it
- If present, underlying allergies, high blood pressure, nasal septal deviation or tumors should be treated.
- Surgery in severe or chronic cases.



**Epistaxis Precautions**

Not nose blowing	No nose picking or rubbing
Cough and sneeze with your mouth open	Do not strain
Do not bend down	Use a humidifier when the air is dry
Keep high blood pressure under control	Temporarily stop medications that prevent blood clotting like aspirin, if possible

If bleeding occurs:

1. Stay calm. Anxiety elevates the blood pressure and makes the bleeding worse.
2. Spray nasal decongestant (Afrin) into the nostril. Or, soak a small cotton ball and place it into the nostril.
3. Pinch the nostril for 5 minutes.
4. Recline or sit with your head elevated above the heart. Gravity reduces blood flow to the head.
5. Put ice packs on the nose and face.